MUSIC & DRAMA

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THE GRAMOPHONE

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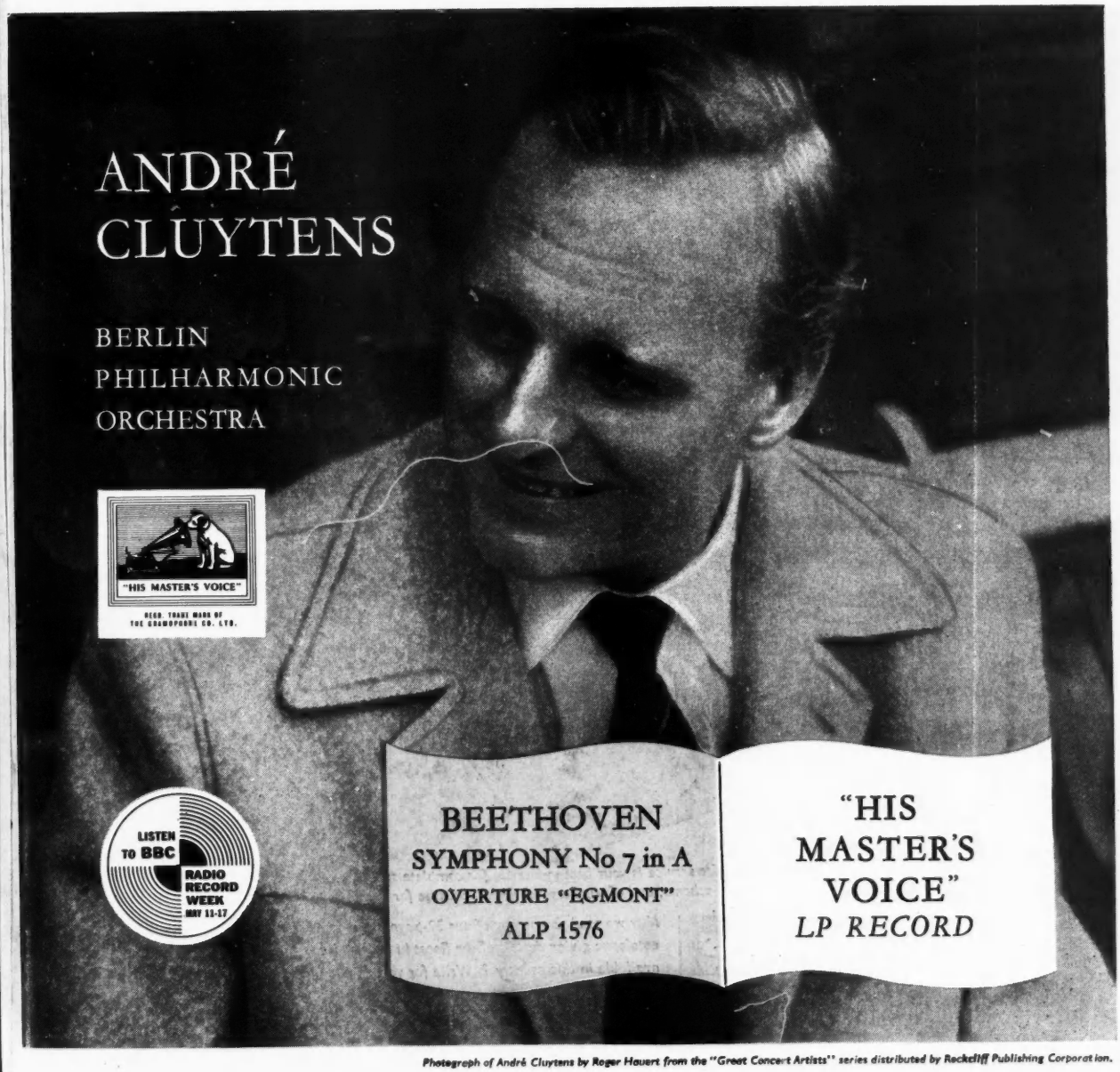
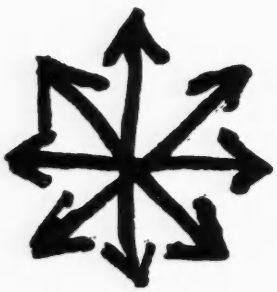


Photograph of André Cluytens by Roger Hauert from the "Great Concert Artists" series distributed by Rockcliff Publishing Corporation.

here

there

all over the world



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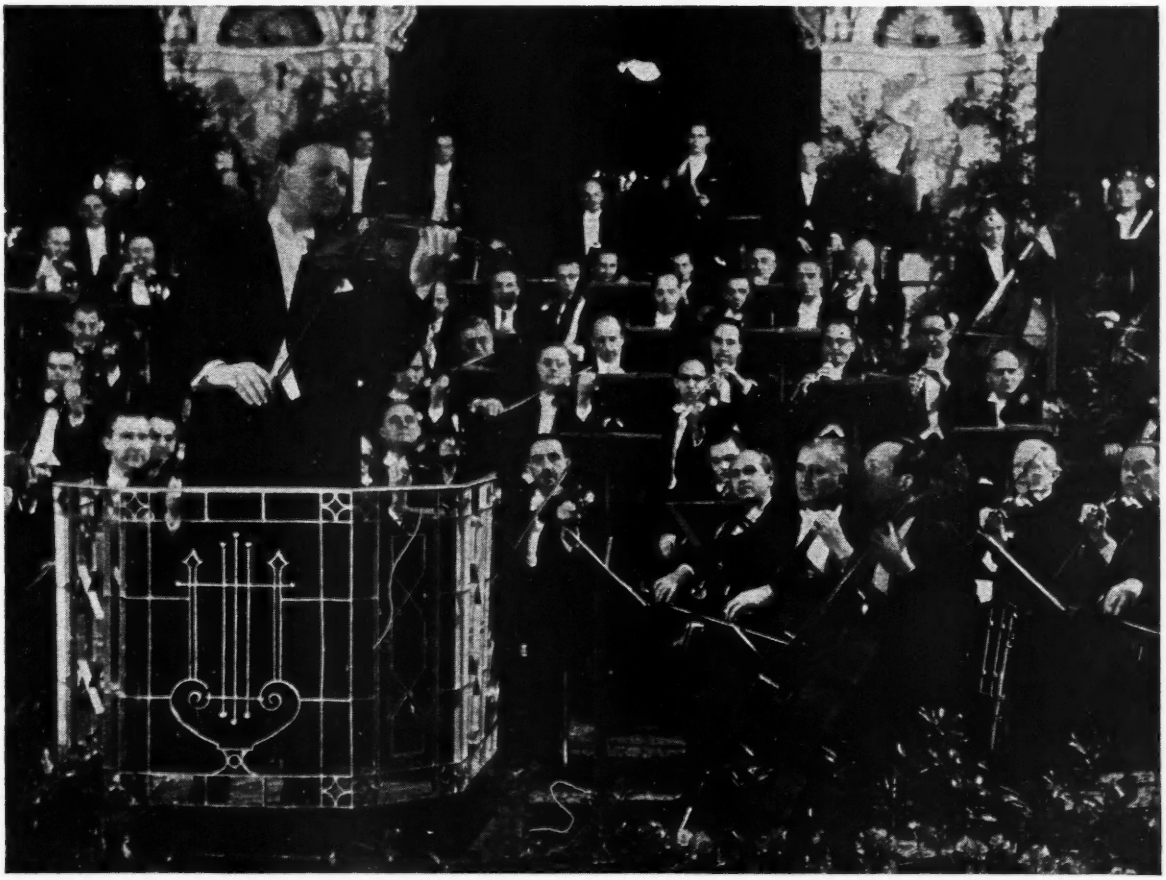
VIENNA PHILHARMONIC JOHANN STRAUSS CONCERT



This is a fabulous record.

It is an LP of the concert which THE VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA has already given with marked success in Vienna and New York, and which they will again present during the World's Fair at Brussels this month.

Under Johann Strauss THE VIENNA PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA used to give concerts every year directed by Strauss from the leader's desk. The present leader of the orchestra—WILLI BOSKOVSKY—has returned to this tradition. The concerts in Vienna and New York have been, and the one in Brussels will be, given with him leading the orchestra and conducting where necessary — the recording has been made in the same way. It is thus the Vienna Phil's *own* record — a record in which they play *their* music as only *they* know how, for *their* delight . . . with the result that all who listen are delighted too.

Champagne polka; Wiener Blut waltz; Pizzicato polka *(Johann & Josef Strauss)*; **Liebeslieder waltz; Heiterer Mut polka** *(Josef Strauss)*; **Explosions polka; Wiener bon-bons waltz; Persian march; 'Waldmeister' overture**

LXT 5432

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A

Vortexion quality equipment

Model W.V.B.

Our specialised MONITOR HEAD MODEL W.V.B. has an additional head and amplifier which enables this recorder to perform a number of useful functions. The most important of these is to monitor the recorded tape a fraction of a second after it is made, and if necessary compare it by throwing a switch, with the signal before it is recorded. This allows the recording engineer to make certain that he has made a first class recording before the artists leave the studio, without the necessity of waiting while another run through is made.

Additional items may be recorded one on top of another while listening to the first, since a switch is provided for the erase, and the bias, which also acts as a partial erase, can be lowered slightly, and its new value checked on the meter. In a similar manner the original signal may be fed back and recorded, resulting in an echo, the time constant of which is controlled by the speed of the tape and the distance apart of the heads.

VORTEXION RECORDERS use a synchronous capstan motor to ensure accurate recording and playback speed.

Many years of steady development have enabled us to still further improve the Vortexion W.V.A. and W.V.B. recorders which are now fitted with clock type position indicators.

All componets which could contribute to noise or reliability are carefully measured and selected individually before incorporation, resulting in an exceedingly low background noise and distortion with frequency response within ± 1.5 db 50-10,000 c/s and ± 3 db 40-12,000 c/s.

★ The meter fitted for reading signal level will also read bias voltage to enable a level response to be obtained under all circumstances. A control is provided for bias adjustment to compensate low mains or ageing valves.

★ A lower bias lifts the treble response and increases distortion. A high bias attenuates the treble and reduces distortion. The normal setting is inscribed for each instrument.

★ The distortion of the recording amplifier under recording conditions is too low to be accurately measured and is negligible.

★ A heavy Mumetal shielded microphone transformer is built in for 15-30 ohms balanced and screened line, and requires only 7 micro-volts approximately to fully load. This is equivalent to 20 ft. from a ribbon microphone and the cable may be extended 440 yds. without appreciable loss.

★ The 0.5 megohm input is fully loaded by 18 millivolts and is suitable for crystal P.U.s, microphone or radio inputs.

★ A power plug is provided for a radio feeder unit, etc. Variable bass and treble controls are fitted for control of the playback signal.

★ The power output is 4 watts heavily damped by negative feedback and an oval internal speaker is built in for monitoring purposes.

★ The playback amplifier may be used as a microphone or gramophone amplifier separately or whilst recording is being made.

★ The unit may be left running on record or playback, even with 1,750 ft. reels, with the lid closed.

POWER SUPPLY UNIT for operation with Tape Recorder or similar equipment on 12V. car battery.

This D.C. to A.C. supply unit has been specially manufactured to provide 1% accurate 50 cycle A.C. power for 50 c/s synchronous motors and amplifiers sensitive to mains noise. The output from the 50 cycle is well filtered to reduce harmonics and give approximately the same degree of quietness as normal 50 cycle mains.

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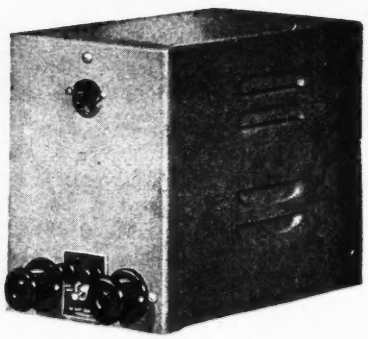
The unit is fitted in an 18 gauge steel case to give screening, but it should not be placed close to tape heads in case the field causes slight hum.

The case measures 9 in. x 6 in. x 9 in.



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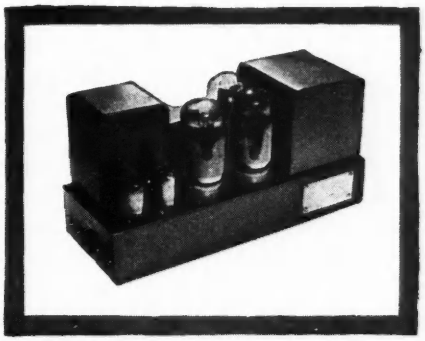

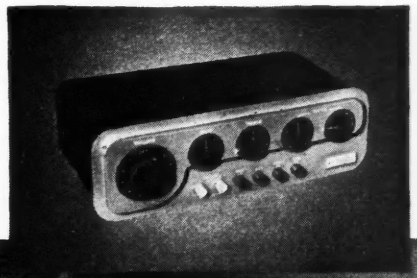

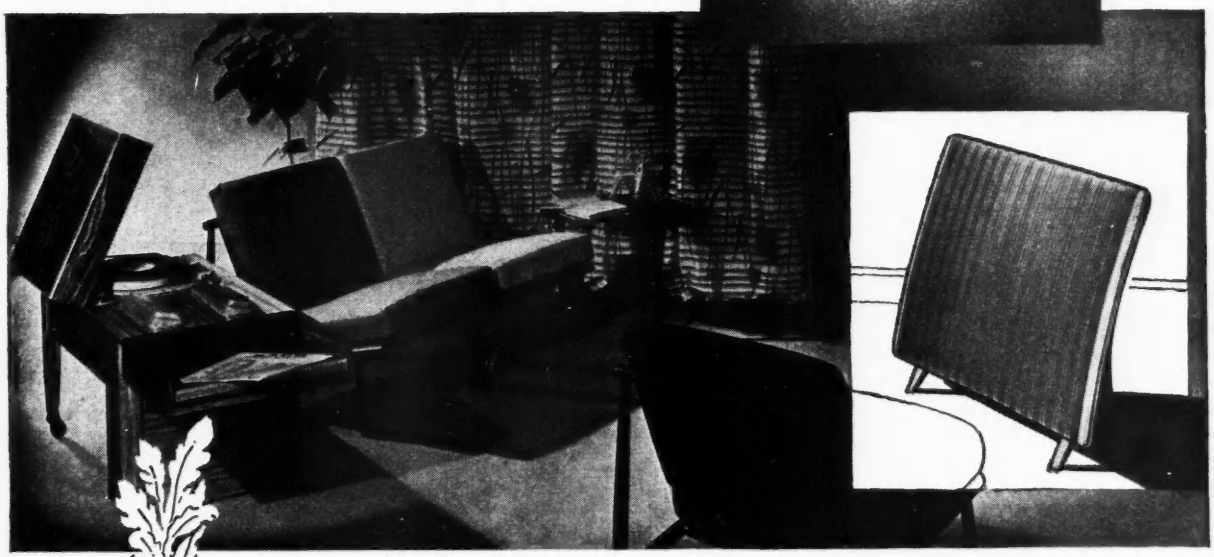

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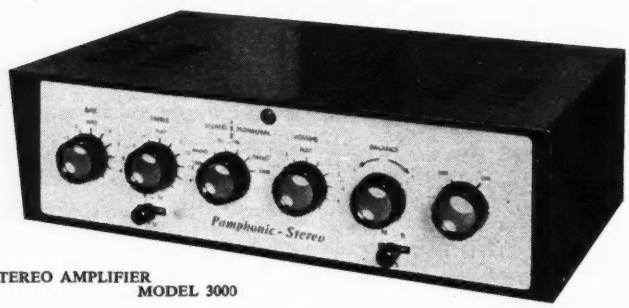

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- Stylus and record wear reduced almost to a point of non-existence.
- Everything on the record is reproduced without distortion or deterioration, because a stylus guided by the P.T.A. follows exactly the groove made by the cutting stylus which originally made the record.
- The Mackie P.T.A. is hand built and minutely balanced for any cartridge :—Acos, Collaro, Garrard, Goldring Miratwin, Tannoy, etc.

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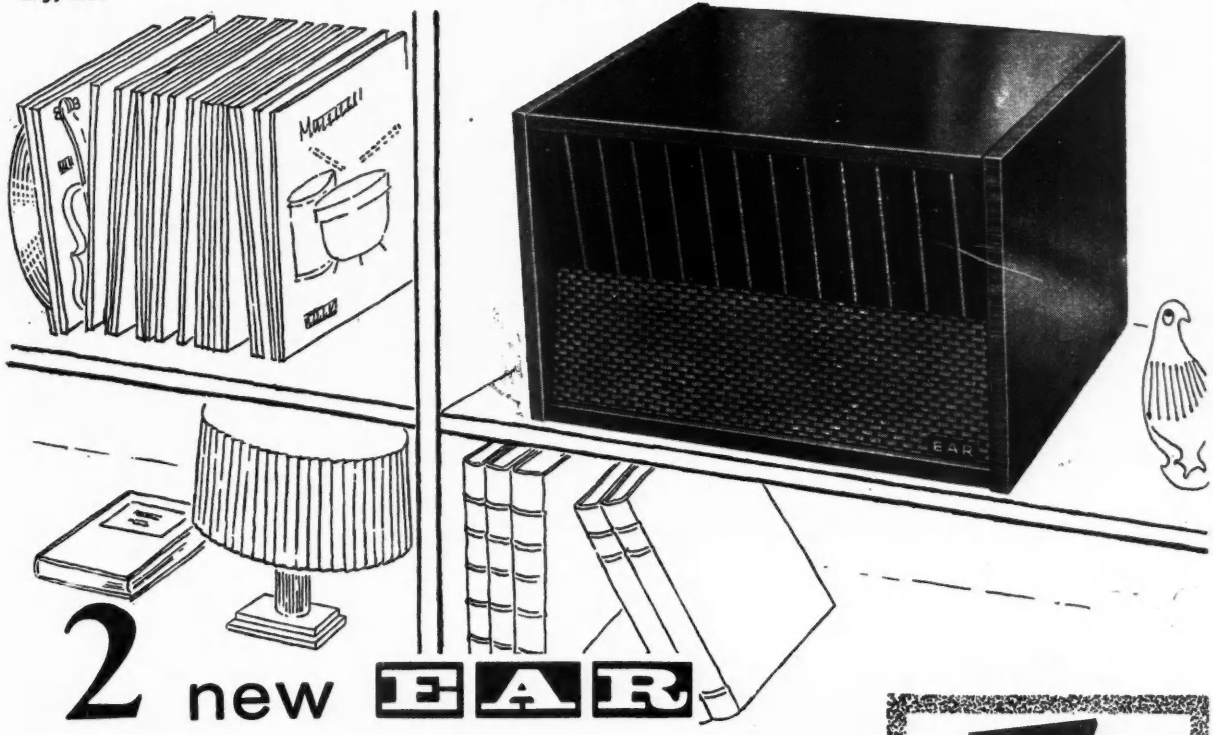

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The T.C.8H is a high output crystal cartridge, fitted with replacement cantilever type sapphire needles. Usually used with single valve amplifiers.

SPECIFICATION

Equivalent capacity ..	1,250 p.f.
Output at (1,000 Cps.) at 1.2 cm/sec	T.C.8M—.3 volts. T.C.8M—.9 volts.
Response, using latest N.A.B curves	T.C.8M flat, within ± 3 db. up to 12,000 c/s. T.C.8H flat within ± 3 db. up to 7,000 c/s.
Load resistance	1 megohm.
Weight of Cartridge ..	11 grams.
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Designed to track when used with average as well as high fidelity pick-up arms and, at the same time, giving adequate protection to the finest microgroove recordings.
Sensitivity: Will drive an amplifier or receiver with sensitivity of :—
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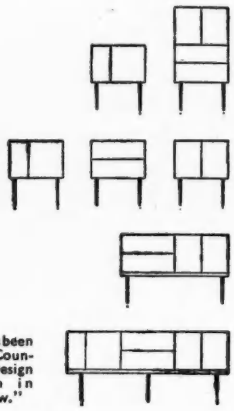

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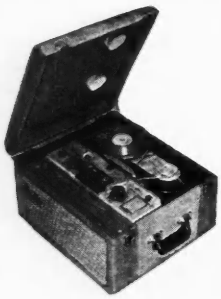

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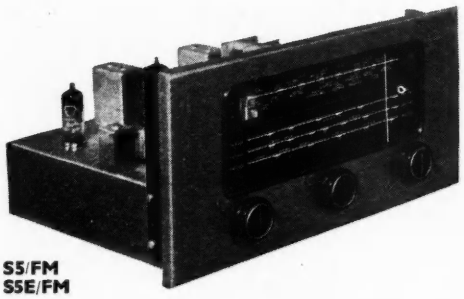

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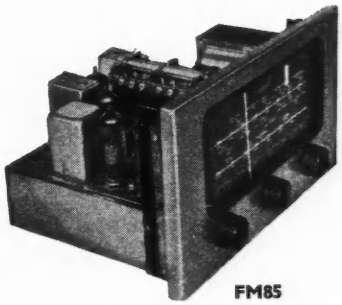

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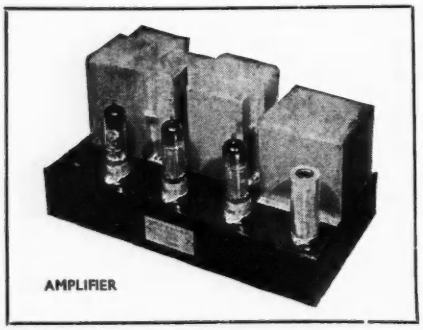

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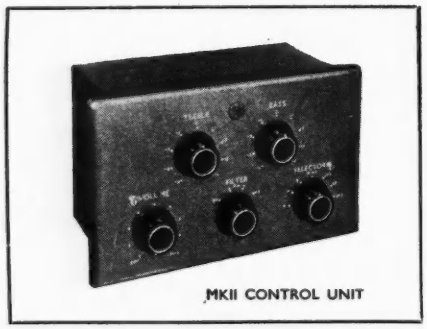

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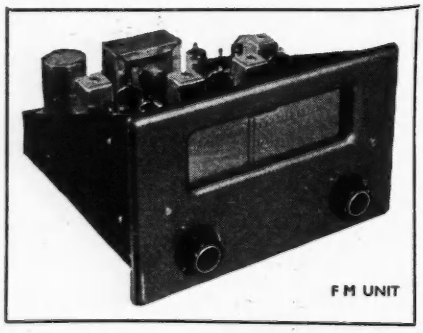

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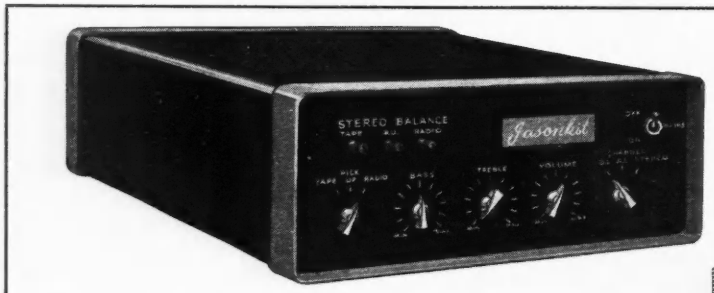

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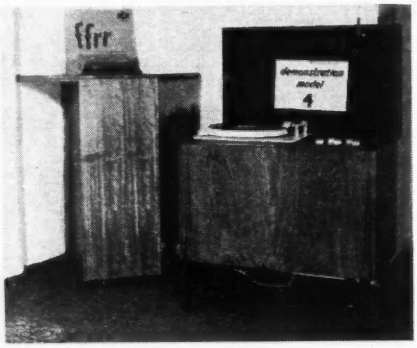

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THE GRAMOPHONE MAY, 1958 - VOL. XXXV - No. 420

Incorporating VOX . THE RADIO CRITIC . BROADCAST REVIEW

Edited by SIR COMPTON MACKENZIE . CHRISTOPHER STONE *London Editor* CECIL POLLARD

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A QUARTERLY RETROSPECT

By JOHN WARRACK

TO follow Edward Sackville-West in writing the Quarterly Retrospect is clearly a deed of some presumption—*lèse-majesté*, almost. I can only enter the plea that it is done at a properly respectful distance of some three years; indeed, that the gap caused by the withdrawal of that discriminating critic has been felt severely enough to prompt some sort of attempt to fill it. Obviously no useful purpose can be served by attempting to chart these years retrospectively—the issues and re-issues lie so thick as to obliterate any distinctive landmarks—so perhaps I may be allowed to open a clean (and as yet unblotted) copybook and date it 1958.

Constantin Silvestri

The arrival of the Rumanian conductor Constantin Silvestri in England, was that of a cat among critical pigeons. He has been freely hailed as great, bowling over players and audience at a swoop, no less freely condemned as a brilliant but wilful eccentric; while I have several times at his concerts overheard splenetic outbursts from members of the public that if printed would land a critic straight in the dock for libel. (Incidentally, concertgoers who complain that critics are grumpy and rude ought, like Gerontius, to use well the interval, and listen to what members of the average public have to say.) Silvestri's virtuosity must be beyond doubt. No-one but a born conductor with an impeccably developed technique could carry an orchestra with him through all the detailed rubato and tempo changes as he does, and make them sound unanimously approved. It is highly charged emotional music in which Silvestri excels, and to which he naturally turns; but even the intensely expressed feelings of Dvořák's *New World* and Tchaikovsky's last three symphonies (H.M.V.) are not explicit enough for him: he must screw up the intensity, lavish further gusts of breathy emotion upon some of the most articulately emotional music ever composed. Yet there is always a strong feeling that everything Silvestri does has been thought out from basic premises upwards. You may hate what he does, be passionately convinced that he's flatly wrong about it; but I, at any rate, have never had the feeling that it springs from a superficial misreading of the score or a desire to hit off a cheap success by shock tactics. The contradictions are very bewildering. In the first two movements of Tchaikovsky's fourth symphony, I was so maddened by the swooning rubato and the laborious acceleration up to tempo at every new section that I could scarcely sit still; the last two were so cleanly and excitingly played that it was impossible to sit still. This bending about of the music is well outside the limits of rubato, for there is never any "paying back", and when exactly the same exaggerated inflections are repeated every time a tune appears, they come to sound not spontaneous, arising from the situation in which the tune appears, but contrived and mannered. The slow tempi, too, grow steadily more enervating. On the record of the *Pathétique* there is hardly a moment when he comes within a stone's throw of Tchaikovsky's metronome markings. The Allegro of the first movement (marked 116) is started at 92; the famous second subject nearly throttles itself with emotion—it is marked 69, and (as far as one may judge among the *tenuti* and *ritenuti*) is played at something below 40: at this point the weight came off the top of my metronome. It is the same story in the 5/4 movement, and in the waltz of No. 5, both marked *con grazia* and played so ponderously, with lurching *accelerandi* and *crescendi*, as to ignore the particular quality of easy-flowing charm Tchaikovsky clearly had in mind. The emotion is never lightened, as in these movements it should be. Then suddenly, at the Presto of No. 5's finale, Silvestri stamps on the accelerator and sends the speed revving up beyond the maker's recommended 144 to a hurtling 200 that plunged the metronome weight down to the bottom and had the stick thrashing like a dog's tail. In the *New World*, how on earth can the same man be deaf enough to slow up the scherzo's trio so that musical nonsense is made of the little three-note ostinato figure continued into it, and yet understand so perfectly what many conductors miss, the passage in the Largo when the tune returns for the last time, and, sighing over it, the strings are for the moment choked by their own nostalgia and three times are unable to continue? Only Silvestri could manage both—they are typical of his whole approach. One could almost say, in the case of this Largo, that he has at last found an instance when the music really does stop through surcharge of emotion, and he understands it accordingly. But when the details are most wilfully wrong, they are presented with exemplary clarity of phrasing and sonority—a pity that the recorded sound has so far done him less than justice. These are not performances I should choose to live with. But Silvestri is a conductor it is impossible to ignore.

Rosalyn Tureck

Silvestri stock is high at the moment; but Turecks have taken a critical plunge and are well below par. Is it mere capriciousness, akin to prep. school crazes, that makes musicians and music-lovers so often enthuse rapturously over a new artist and only later discover "feet of clay"? Orchestral players are more fickle than anyone in this respect. But critics are almost as bad. As one who has admired Rosalyn Tureck profoundly, I have found it a galling experience to listen to her recent Festival Hall concerts and her long awaited record of what has perhaps been her greatest performance, the Goldberg variations (H.M.V.)—doubly depressing, since one neither likes to feel let down nor to appear to be climbing on a bandwaggon in full retreat. Thurber-wise, we are all disenchanted now. I do think that Miss Tureck is going through a difficult artistic phase, which is unfortunately reflected in the new H.M.V. records. Twice in the concert hall I have been deeply moved and completely exhausted by her performance; yet this set failed to work its magic, try it as I would—concentrating hard with score in hand, doing something else and using it as a diversion *à la* Keyserling (I haven't yet had cause to apply it for insomnia), comparing it with the others available. Always disappointment. Like Silvestri, Miss Tureck has gone right down to the foundations of the work and of Bach style, and has come up with a powerfully impressive individual solution. But when we have picked ourselves up after the impact of such artists, we begin to see that there are drawbacks in the methods, contradictions perhaps, longueurs and puzzles. We grow less ready to accept what seemed brilliant new light on an old work as gospel, and the shortcomings that

are the companion of great originality begin to obtrude ; while the artist, offering the performance as the fruit of long, deep experience, is reluctant to tolerate any other view. Greatly as I still really admire Miss Tureck and cherish the memory of some of her performances, I think the role of high priestess becomes her ill and damages her playing. Again, like Silvestri (and here resemblance ends), she is addicted to slow tempi—perhaps partly as a result of using a piano, with its greater sustaining tone than the harpsichord. She also insists on every repeat, so that for the first time the work covers two full 12 in. records. Only the richest and most enthusiastic Tureck supporters can seriously face paying twice as much in order to hear every stretch of the music twice, when they could spend the extra money on another record of the work or even on something else. Of the other piano recordings, Glenn Gould's (Philips) provides great pleasure, gently and thoughtfully handling Landowska's "black pearl", the wonderful No. 25 in the minor, and mustering an attractively crisp, lively style that is very enjoyable in the faster variations. Landowska herself remains incomparable, on her old H.M.V. record, not incontestable in everything she does, but so deeply and securely musical and so spirited that it is to this performance that one returns as to a touchstone.

György Cziffra

Another pianist who has erupted into our midst in more recent months is György Cziffra (H.M.V.). At his first London concert, eyes stood on stalks as in an old Bateman drawing and ears flapped disbelievingly at the technical wizardry, and records now begin to confirm the story—a diamond-like lustre of tone maintained at every dynamic level from a blinding fortissimo down to the remotest shimmer, a fantastic brilliance and speed of fingerwork that ranges unscathed among the most precipitous Lisztian difficulties in the concertos and the Hungarian Rhapsodies. Never is there the faintest suspicion that Cziffra could trip. For him there are no difficulties of execution, the most incredible seeming child's play under his fingers. One of the transcendent merits of his playing is the crystal-like clearness which never fails for a moment even in the most complicated and, to anybody else, impossible passages ; it is as if he has photographed them in their minutest detail upon the ear of the listener—but these last three sentences are not about Cziffra, but are Sir Charles Hallé writing of Liszt's own playing. There is something in Cziffra's Liszt that irresistibly reminds one of the contemporary accounts of the Abbé at the piano—this, you feel, is how he must have sounded.

Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli

Michelangeli's first LP record to be issued here (Rachmaninov fourth concerto and the Ravel G major on H.M.V.) is truly superb. His technique yields nothing to Cziffra, witness the brilliant toccata effects in Ravel's finale; and he has a gentle vein of poetry that unfolds the long melody of the Adagio as if exploring its beauty for the first time. As Trevor Harvey pointed out in his review of the record, Michelangeli's marvellous finger control gives us a lovely effect in the first movement's chain of linked trills and *glissandi*—the piano tone is like a delicate, living voice. It is a gentler version of the wild *glissando* in the same composer's *Alborada del Gracioso*, which was so miraculously played by Dinu Lipatti on his famous record of it (Columbia), not like a mere finger slide but as if whirling the tone from the instrument. It is a great pity that the engineers' admiration for Michelangeli has led them to balance him consistently above the orchestra (the Philharmonia on top of its form), for not only are the effects enchanting, when they aren't ribald, but Ravel expressed his aim that this should be " a concerto in the true sense of the word . . . very much in the same spirit as those of Mozart and Saint-Saëns "—that is, a contest or argument on equal terms between instrument and orchestra.

Walton's Symphony

It is sad that neither of the two LP recordings of Walton's symphony are satisfactory. Back in the thirties there was a thorn-splintering old Decca by Harty and the L.S.O. that blazed a notable trail in times when modern music was a rarity on records. Orchestral showpieces seem to lure record companies only more than complete sets of obscure *tafelmusik* when they want to step off the beaten track. This symphony is certainly very thickly scored—no one mutters more crossly about that than the composer—but the repeated underlining of every point is essentially part of this emphatic music, and to rescore it more simply or clearly would be emasculation. Even so, the work ought not to be beyond the powers of modern engineers. The 1953 H.M.V. with Walton and the Philharmonia came, perhaps, a little too soon for the recorded quality demanded, splendid performance as it obviously was ; the new Nixa with Sir Adrian Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra offers a much better sound quality but suffers from distorted balance and is, in any case, a fatally weak performance : it sounds like music willing to admit the existence of another point of view, whereas this symphony seems to hold, as Somerset Maugham once said in his younger days, that tolerance is only another name for indifference. A new recording from Sir William with the Philharmonia is an urgent necessity ; meanwhile, the older version of the two continues to provide an authentically violent utterance that, even to some extent muffled, is preferable to tamer words well spoken.

LETTER FROM AMERICA

By HAROLD C. SCHONBERG

AS these words are being written, the record industry is hotly discussing Columbia's ideas about stereophonic discs. It is generally conceded that disc stereophony is the coming thing, and most companies have large releases planned (one of the majors, it is reliably said, is ready to issue, all at once, a basic library of 100 stereophonic discs when the time is right). It also has generally been assumed that the Westrex 45/45 system would be adopted. Now along comes Dr. Peter Goldmark, of Columbia, who says something to the effect that he and his colleagues have developed a *really* compatible disc. They have figured out that a vertical movement of only two per cent can take care of the second channel; and they say (if I understand them correctly, and I probably don't) that virtually all cartridges for lateral-cut records have at least a two per cent vertical movement anyway. Anyway, there's a lot of agitated discussion going on these days.

Recent releases have been very strong in modern music, and it is difficult to recall a month with such a wide variety of interesting contemporary music. Columbia, which seem well on the path of a complete Schoenberg discography, have just issued the Variations for Orchestra (Op. 31), Serenade for Baritone and Septet (Op. 24), Canon (Op. 28, No. 1) and Four Pieces (Op. 27). Robert Craft conducts an efficient group of musicians. This is the only twelve-tone release. Decca has two Milhaud items—*Les Choéphores* (Lamoureux Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch) and a disc containing the *Globetrotters Suite* and *The Joys of Life* (chamber orchestra conducted by the composer). The two latter works are recent (1957). *Globetrotters* is a travelogue of music from Europe and South America. *Joys* was composed in homage to Watteau. Both represent Milhaud at his most facile. The results are pleasant enough but in essence are probably hack work. *Les Choéphores*, which has been recorded by Heinz Rehfuss and several French singers, is extraordinarily clever—and *chic*. It is another Milhaud score that will date (and has dated) quite rapidly : but what a technique ! Honegger's Fifth Symphony is also on this disc. Decca, in addition to the Milhaud, gives us a coupling of Stravinsky's Concerto for Piano and Winds and Bartók's Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Carl Seemann, the pianist in the Stravinsky (with the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Thomas Scherman) is joined by Edith Picht-Axenfeld for the Bartók. These are strong performances, though a little muffled in sound. And, once more from Decca, is a Hindemith disc, containing the Concert Music for Piano, Brass and Harp (Monique Haas is the fine pianist), the Concerto for Orchestra

and the short *Cupid and Psyche* Overture. The composer is heard conducting the Berlin Philharmonic.

Two well-played Prokofiev discs come from Columbia and Victor. The Columbia has Isaac Stern and the New York Philharmonic conducted by Mitropoulos and Bernstein in the two violin concertos, with Stern in top form. These concertos are often heard. Less familiar is the Piano Concerto No. 2, on the Victor disc, with Nicole Henriot, Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony (Barber's *Medea's Meditation* and *Dance of Vengeance* fills out the last side). Henriot gives the piano part a powerful workout. She sounds much better on records than she does in the concert hall; her tone especially is fuller and much less percussive. Richard Strauss (is he to be listed among the moderns?) is represented by *Arabella*, already out in England, and the *Alpine Symphony*, with Karl Böhm and the Saxon State Orchestra (Decca) in a good performance of the monumental bore. The late Ataulfo Argenta conducts, on an exceptionally fine London disc, Falla's *Retablo de Maese Pedro* and Harpsichord Concerto, the latter with Robert Veyron-Lacroix.

Westminster has several discs of modern music, though in the case of Khrennikov's Symphony No. 1 in B flat minor and Sergei Vassilenko's Piano Concerto in F sharp minor the "modern" will have to be qualified. Vassilenko's concerto, played by Yakov Zak, was composed around 1950 and could have been written in 1850, while the Khrennikov is one of those carefully eclectic Russian works that testify to the low state to which Sovietized music has fallen. One of the few American operas to reach discs is Douglas Moore's *The Devil and Daniel Webster*. On this Westminster recording are a cast headed by Lawrence Winters, and a chorus and orchestra conducted by Armando Alberti. This is a nationalistic work, full of rather self-conscious American themes handled in a conventional manner. It is lyric, but scarcely the product of an original musical mind. More interesting is the Westminster coupling of Françaix' *Le Diable Bouteux* and *Le Cantate de Mephisto*. Françaix himself conducts; the singers are Hugues Cuenod and Doda Conrad. *Diable* is described as a "chamber opéra-comique". The style and format, though definitely not the music, suggests Stravinsky's *Histoire du Soldat*. Again, as in Milhaud, we have French *chic*. The frame is small, but within it the writing is nicely modelled, the ideas tasteful and the general contents charming.

A disc of modern American piano music played by the able William Masselos comes from M.G.M. Charles T. Griffes' Piano Sonata, Dane Rudhyar's *Granites* and Ben Weber's *Episodes* are heard. Rudhyar is an interesting man—French born (his real name is Daniel de Chenneviere), a poet, painter, psychologist, astrologer, mystic and composer. His style is one of extreme dissonance and is laden with Scriabin-like dicta: "The cycle of 12 fifths and 12 fourths are basic and complementary; they actually refer to the formative centres within any living organism, or in the cosmos . . ." How enviable it is to know all about the cosmos! The Griffes sonata, almost equally dissonant, at least has continuity of idea, and the neatly written Weber sketches are the product of a fine craftsman.

Vanguard has embarked on a cycle of the Beethoven symphonies with Sir Adrian Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra of London. Already issued are Nos. 3, 5, 6 and 7, each containing a Beethoven overture as a bonus. Reliable performances, but never very exciting and sometimes much too polite. Westminster has several album sets of orchestral material—a two-disc set of the four Schumann symphonies, with the busy Sir Adrian and the P.P.O. (again reliable, but surely more charm and warmth would have aided the cause), and, also on two discs, the six Bach *Brandenburgs*, well done by Kurt Redel and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Munich. A first recording anywhere, I think, is the M.G.M. disc of Fauré's incidental music to *Shylock* and Lalo's *Divertissement*. Frederick Widemann is the tenor in *Shylock*; the Philharmonia Orchestra of Hamburg is directed by Heinz Steinecke. Lalo's score is the ballet music from his first opera, *Fiesque*. Outside of a charming intermezzo, it has little to recommend it. The Fauré score is, on the other hand, exquisite throughout. This disc cannot be called a success interpretively; the orchestra is not of top calibre and the conductor is rather heavy-handed.

Among piano discs recently issued, one is paramount—the *Diabelli Variations* of Beethoven, played with strength, colour and superb resource by Rudolf Serkin. Vox has a disc named *Chopin Cameos* in which George Banhalmi, a Hungarian now resident in Chicago, is the pianist. The contents are almost entirely unfamiliar: the E flat Rondo, Variations on a German Theme, Variations Brillantes (Op. 12), Bolero and other pieces. Banhalmi is an expert technician and obviously an experienced pianist; but there is not too much profile to his playing. Some unorthodox but interesting playing comes from Friedrich Gulda (London) in a disc of Ravel (Sonatine, *Valses nobles et sentimentales*) and Debussy (*Pour le piano*; *Reflets dans l'eau*; *Soirée dans Grenade*; *L'Isle joyeuse*). Gulda sometimes overstresses strenuously but his interpretations have a good deal of intellectual strength.

Wanda Landowska continues to make records. The veteran harpsichordist plays, for Victor, Bach's C minor Partita, C minor Fantasia and *Capriccio on the Departure of a Beloved Brother*, and also a passacaglia by J. K. F. Fischer. Landowska is much in the same class these days as Albert Schweitzer: a noble musician whose fingers are no longer fully responsive. This accounts for the extremely slow tempos taken by both artists. Victor has youth on its side in the young American basso, Giorgio Tozzi, who sings standard Verdi and Mozart arias with considerable style. Tozzi is most certainly an up-and-coming singer. A great singer now not as young as she was is Kirsten Flagstad, heard in Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* with the Vienna Philharmonic under the omnipresent Sir Adrian; and one wishes that she would no longer take on such difficult music. The strain on her voice is too great. But here I am at the end of my space and have not even mentioned the Epic recording of d'Albert's *Tiefland*, admirably sung by Schoeffler, Brouwenstijn, Hopf and others, with the Vienna State Opera and Chorus under Rudolf Moralt, or an Epic disc sung by Suzanne Danco and entitled *Album de Musique*. This is something that Rossini got up in 1835 for a young lady. It consists of songs by contemporary composers—Rossini himself, Bellini, Paer, Mercadante, Meyerbeer, Morlacchi, Cherubini, Spontini, Onslow and others. Some of the songs are utterly delightful, such as Marco Marliani's little gondola song, the tiny *Air des trois notes* by Henri Berton, Spontini's classic *L'adieu* and the long-phrased Bellini offering. It would appear that there are treasures in the early nineteenth century that we have not even begun to explore.

REVIEWERS' NOTES

T.H. writes:

In my notice of Hindemith's Symphony for Concert Band (March issue) I stated that it was composed in 1927. This was a stupid confusion with the Concert Music for Wind Band, Op. 41, of that date and if I had only glanced at the title page of the score on my lap, I should not have made the slip. The work recorded is dated 1951. My comment on the character of the music stands, even though it is, in fact, a "later work".

I apologise for having misled readers and thank those who took the trouble to write and correct me.

J.N. writes:

When I reviewed the new Vox record (PL10530) of the Schoenberg violin and piano concertos last month, I deplored the fact that neither of the scores was available. However, Chappell's now announce a score of the Violin Concerto. The format is 10½ in. by 7½ in. (not exactly miniature, but handier than a full score) and the price is 25s. For anyone who has the record this is an investment that I strongly recommend. Incidentally, I understand that the issue of the Vox disc has been delayed but it should be available by the time these words appear in print.

A. P. writes:

The price of the score of Rawsthorne's Second Piano Concerto (O.U.P.), mentioned last month, has been increased to 17s. 6d. Rubbra's Piano Concerto (on the same disc, H.M.V. CLP1164) is published, in a two-piano reduction by the composer, by Lengnick; and I understand a miniature score is in preparation.

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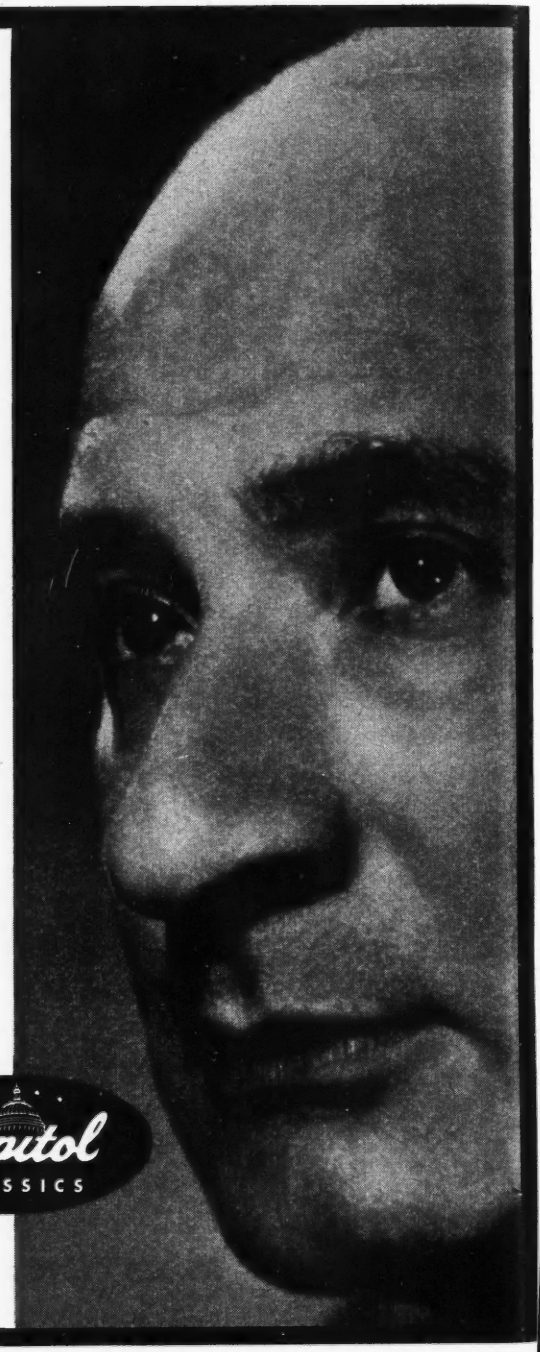

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ANALYTICAL NOTES AND FIRST REVIEWS

By

ROGER FISKE . TREVOR HARVEY . PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE
MALCOLM MACDONALD . JEREMY NOBLE . ANDREW PORTER
ALEC ROBERTSON . LIONEL SALTER . DENIS STEVENS

ORCHESTRAL

ADDISON. Carte Blanche—Ballet Suite. **Pro Arte Orchestra** conducted by **John Addison.** Pye CEM36007 (7 in., 12s. 10½d.).

John Addison is a composer whose music will have been heard—though perhaps not listened to—by film-goers (scores for *Seven Days to Noon*, *Private's Progress*, *Reach for the Sky*, among many others), and known to theatre-goers through *Cranks* and *The Entertainer*. *Carte Blanche* was a Walter Gore ballet which the Sadler's Wells junior company brought out at the 1953 Edinburgh Festival; the Concert Suite was first heard at the Proms in 1956, and a score of it is obtainable from the Oxford University Press, at 12s. 6d. The music now seems to me to hold up outside the theatre less well than I formerly thought. It is all bright and capable, but without the melodic inventiveness and fancy that, say, Malcolm Arnold, would have brought to a similar task. The Waltz, for example, is a series of gestures in 3/4 time, achieving at best a broken-backed melody that never gets anywhere. The most successful number, in a rather obvious way, is the Romanza.

A.P.

BEETHOVEN. Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92. Overture, "Egmont", Op. 84. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **André Cluytens.** H.M.V. ALP1576 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Symphony No. 7:

Concertgebouw, Kleiber	(4/51) (R)LXT5360
Philh., Karajan	(3/53) 33CX1035
Vienna Op., Scherchen	(1/54) WLP5089
Belgian Radio, Andre	(2/54) LGX66011
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini	(4/54) ALP1119
Detroit S.O., Paray	(10/54) (R)MRL2008
Berlin P.O., Kempen	(3/55) ABL3017
Berlin P.O., E. Jochum	(10/55) DGM18069
Vienna P.M., Perlea	(12/55) PL9120
Philh., Klemperer	(10/56) 33CX1379
Czech P.O., Georgescu	(9/57) LPV249

This is perhaps one of the better things that Cluytens has done, but I do not think it necessary to discuss it in relation to the Klemperer, Karajan, Kleiber or Toscanini versions, for it is not in that class, but a decent, average reading such as we might hear in Festival Hall any week of the year. The firm, solid string tone of the Berlin Philharmonic is heard to good advantage (especially at the start of *Egmont*), and the wind chording in the introduction to the Seventh Symphony is very beautiful, and sensitive. But there is a slight overhang to the sound, too much resonance or echo perhaps, which takes away some of the clarity, fills some of the rests in the first-movement transition from introduction to *vivace*. This *vivace* is not a very lively one; here, and at the start of the slow movement, I feel Cluytens's inability to start decisively in and maintain a convincing tempo. A curious, rather pleasant effect has been produced by bringing forward the viola line in the Introduction. On the other hand I think the trumpets' blared A through the close of the second trio is rather tiresome. On a point of text we may note that the traditional *arco* close to the slow movement is retained. There are one or two touches of pre-echo—nothing serious, but a rare fault on E.M.I. recordings.

A.P.

BERLIOZ. Benvenuto Cellini, Op. 23—Overture. **King Lear, Op. 4**—Overture. **Roman Carnival, Op. 9**—Overture. **The Corsair, Op. 21**—Overture. **Beatrice and Benedict**—Overture. **Orchestre du Théâtre National de l'Opéra, Paris,** conducted by **André Cluytens.** Columbia 33CX1524 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Discs of Berlioz overtures, of which there are now three, are one of the most tiresome of LP offerings. Since the gramophone is almost our only way of getting to know most of them, concert programmes being as unadventurous as they are, Berlioz lovers will want as many of the overtures as possible. But for that, one will have to buy two 12-inch discs and then find oneself with duplicates of several overtures. Details of earlier discs are as follows:

Philips ABL3083 (Beecham): *King Lear, Francs-Juges, Roman Carnival, Waverley, The Corsair* (12/55)

Decca LXT5162 (Wolff): *King Lear, The Corsair, Roman Carnival, Franc-Juges* (4/56)

It will be seen that all the Decca titles are included in the Beecham record. The Decca disc, however, is the only one that has so far been at all broken up, *King Lear* and *The Corsair* being available on LW5321. (see now p. 507. Ed.).

Beecham's performances are unsurpassed for their imagination and understanding and this is certainly the choice of the three. Wolff gets less good playing and less illuminating performances and since his four overtures are all on Beecham's disc plus *Waverley*, this, I think, can be disregarded. But if you want *Benvenuto Cellini* (and who would not ?) and the most attractive *Beatrice and Benedict*, you will also have to get this latest issue, and I am sure you will not be at all disappointed. Cluytens gets lively, exciting playing, particularly from the strings and particularly when he wants some really soft playing. The recording, very good, helps him in this: and a noticeable feature of Columbia's technicians' work is the admirable clarity of the double-bass line when it departs from the 'cellos.

This record is much recommended.

T.H.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37. Rudolf Serkin (piano), **Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by **Eugene Ormandy.** Philips ABR4062 (10 in., 30s. 11d.).

BEETHOVEN. Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor, Op. 37. Ventislav Yankoff (piano), **N.W.D.R. Symphony Orchestra of Hamburg** conducted by **Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt.** Parlophone PMD1051 (10 in., 27s. 10d.).

Backhaus, V.P.O., Boehm	(2/51) (R)LXT5353
Gilels, Conservatoire, Cluytens	(11/54) 33CX1188
Fischer, Philh., Fischer	(2/55) BLP1063
Kempff, Berlin P.O., Kempen	(12/55) DGM18130
de Groot, V.S.O., Otterloo	(12/56) ABR4047
Wuehrer, Stuttgart P.M., Davisson	(5/57) PL9570
Rubinstein, Sym. of Air, Krips	(12/57) RB16043

This is only an interim report on the present state of Beethoven 3rd Piano Concerto recordings, for I understand that yet another, played by Solomon, is likely to come along at any time, so the whole situation will then have to be considered again.

Of the present two, I find Yankoff dull. I have tried to persuade myself that I should accept it as a different approach from Serkin's lively one and that it is even possibly more Beethovenian, but I cannot get away from feeling that it is dull playing. The first movement is taken at a speed more like four than two in a bar. Other pianists have done this (and there is certainly no need to play it at Serkin's speed) but have contrived to put a touch of brilliance into it which has contributed the *brio* that Beethoven indicates. It is precisely *brio* that is lacking here. Perhaps the general recorded sound, of the orchestra as well, does not help, for it is not particularly brilliant either.

Yankoff's virtues are that he does play consistently softly when a passage is so marked, whereas Serkin usually soon begins to let the tone grow, and that he is, as you may guess from what I have already said, particularly good in the slow movement. But the finale lacks glitter and the much slower speed for the A flat clarinet tune in this movement seems to me disastrous and the momentum is lost for a long while.

Schmidt-Isserstedt's accompaniment is certainly truer to Beethoven's style than is Ormandy's, but a concerto conductor's accompaniment is, of course, largely dictated by the soloist's conception and so the orchestral contribution tends to dullness too.

Serkin's approach is as different as could be, having, whether you like the interpretation or not, the authority of the great pianist. His first movement is very brisk and is even inclined to race here and there, but it is full of *brio* and brilliance, while Beethoven's cadenza is really marvellously played. The slow movement and finale are both good. The style of the orchestral part

is open to criticism, as I have already suggested.

Serkin is easily my choice of the two, though I do not know that I would choose him of all the pianists listed above. Kempff is so very good (but I wish he had played Beethoven's cadenza), certainly the most sensitive of them all, but his record is also so very expensive. Wührer gives a fine, solid performance and this disc is a real bargain, having the 2nd Concerto on the reverse. I don't think anyone would be greatly disappointed if he invested in this. I must add that Rubinstein's version can now be bought separately from the complete set, but it is not the best of his performances, and this is also very dear.

I wonder what the Solomon record will be like ? T.H.

BRAHMS. Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77. Berl Serofsky (violin), **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Rudolf Moralt.** Philips SBL5222 (12 in., 33s. 8½d.).

Renardy, Concertgebouw, Munch	(7/51) LXT2566
de Vito, Philh., Schwarz	(3/54) ALP1104
Ferras, V.P.O., Schuricht	(8/54) LXT2949
Martzy, Philh., Kletzki	(10/54) 33CX1165
Stern, R.P.O., Beecham	(1/55) ABL3023
Haendel, L.S.O., Celibidache	(2/55) CLP1032
Oistrakh, Dresden S.O., Konwitschny	(7/55) DGM18199
Heifetz, Chicago S.O., Reiner	(3/56) ALP1334
Schneiderhan, Berlin P.O., Kempen	(5/57) DGM18132
Kogan, Paris Cons., Bruck	(2/58) 33CX1506

At first one is struck by the fact that there is rather a lot of surface noise, but this apart the quality is pretty good and so is the balance. The violinist, whose name seems to be new to the catalogue, has plenty of technique and also of feeling for the music. In some of the high lyrical passages (copied by Brahms from the Beethoven concerto ?) he seems to have too much " Hungarian " vibrato and misses the necessary purity of tone. This is quite a considerable defect for he thereby spoils some of the loveliest moments. Also his grasp seems to slacken at the end of the first movement. Elsewhere he plays many passages most expressively, and there is much to enjoy in the orchestral playing as well. In the second movement the woodwind is not consistently in tune in the opening section. The violinist is excellent in the finale until, in the six-eight coda, he seems to tire and intonation falters. Nevertheless this is a goodish performance, and the fact that it is very considerably cheaper than any of the other versions listed above (and at least as good as several of them) should give it a good chance of success. R.F.

BRAHMS. Hungarian Dances, Nos. 1-21. Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by **Mario Rossi.** Vanguard PVL7049 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

He must indeed be an enthusiast for *Hungarian Dances* who wants to have all twenty-one of them. But of course there is no need to listen to them in one go, as the unfortunate critic has to. Indeed, that would be most inadvisable, for they somehow don't stand the strain as well as do Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*. Most listeners will find a large number of them entirely unfamiliar, by the way, the early numbers and the last few being those most regularly played.

Performances here are really excellent and so is the recording. The labels very sensibly give names of orchestrators—Brahms himself orchestrated only three of them and the best are probably those arranged by Dvořák.

I cannot help adding that if you play the piano, however modestly, you will get far more pleasure from playing the dances yourself, with a partner, in their original piano duet version—and the music is far cheaper than the record to buy ! So the recommendation is: do it yourself if you can. If not, you can scarcely fail to be enlivened by this excellent record. The playing is spirited and polished at the same time, the rhythm always of the kind that makes you want to dance, the sound is rich and full. T.H.

BRAHMS. Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68. Cleveland Orchestra conducted by **George Szell.** Fontana CFL1010 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Concertgebouw, Beinum	(6/52) (R)LXT5366
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini	(11/52) ALP1012
Berlin P.O., Keilberth	(12/53) LGX66003
Philh., Karajan	(2/54) 33CX1053
Vienna Op., Scherchen	(6/54) WLP5189
Philh., Cantelli	(7/54) ALP1152
Los Angeles P.O., Wallenstein	(1/55) AXTL1064
New York P.O., Walter	(8/55) ABR4037
Berlin P.O., E. Jochum	(6/55) DGM18182
P.P.O., Boult	(6/56) NCL16000
V.P.O., Krips	(7/57) LXT5292
Boston S.O., Munch	(11/57) RB16024
Pittsburgh S.O., Steinberg	(11/57) P8340
Sym. of Air, Markevitch	(12/57) DGM18364
Philh., Klemperer	(2/58) 33CX1504
Chicago S.O. Kubelik	(5/58) MRL2563

Szell gives an unusual reading of the Brahms First in that whenever the music is at all suitable he propels it irresistibly, refusing to allow it merely to jog along. There is no interference with the more actively tranquil parts of the work ; indeed these are thrown into the greater relief by the readiness of the rest of the music to take wings.

It is not a view of Brahms which will meet with universal acceptance, but it is certainly one which will have its adherents—more of them in number, possibly, after hearing this performance than beforehand. For the orchestra do play well, offering all the lightness and accentuation necessary to make this reading of Szell's sound convincing. Principally, of course, it is the first and the third movements which are affected, for such forcefulness is more often to be heard in the finale, and to the slow movement it has no relevance. Quite a point is scored in the finale by allowing virtually no break between this movement and its predecessor ; the lead-in following effectively almost as if the last chord of the *Allegretto* were its missing downbeat. (I would hate to discover that the effect was actually an unintended accident of engineering !)

A good quality of recording (very slightly on the harsh side) helps towards the agreeable total effect. Once only the balance misfires: towards the end of the slow movement the solo violin tends to get swamped. But amends are made by the horns with their bell-music in the finale —this does often, especially on disc, tend to get swamped, but in this recording sings out marvellously. (Elsewhere in the finale, too, Szell arranges for the horns to sing out marvellously on some notes Brahms never wrote for them ; but I cannot help agreeing that he might have done so very usefully.)

To anyone who shares the particular view Szell takes of this symphony, this version must stand high in the recommended list. My own preference, on balance, remains still with the Philharmonia version made with Cantelli for H.M.V. ; a most beautiful disc. But perhaps an even richer quality of sound is to be obtained from the Decca version made by Krips and the Vienna Philharmonic ; and the additional inclusion of the Tragic Overture is not by any means the only virtue of Nixa's version with Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra. The R.C.A. of Munch and the Boston Symphony I regret that I have not heard ; reviewing it last November, T.H. found it exciting, but continued on balance to prefer both Boult and Krips. M.M.

BRAHMS. Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Rafael Kubelik.** Decca LXT5419 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

Concertgebouw, Szell	(6/52) (R)LXT5367
Hallé, Barbirolli	(5/53) BLP1015
V.P.O., Boehm	(12/53) LXT2843
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini	(10/54) ALP1166
Hamburg P.O., Keilberth	(2/55) LGX66035
New York P.O., Walter	(6/55) ABR4031
Philh., Cantelli	(9/56) BLP1083
P.P.O., Boult	(3/57) NCL16002
Berlin P.O., E. Jochum	(3/57) DGM18309

Kubelik takes a dignified, but at the same time a most curiously restrained view of the Brahms Third. The first movement gives continuously the impression of being held on the leash ; where normally this is among those few in the later classical symphonies to benefit from having its exposition repeated, on this occasion it seems an almost unwelcome longueur. The slow movement, too, drags. The *Allegretto*, on the other hand, goes very well ; and the horn solo in its recapitulation is played most beautifully—as of course, are many other passages throughout the symphony. But the finale, again, seems reluctant to get under way ; and though it eventually does so, it is, one feels, almost too late.

The recording is everywhere good, without having quite the richness of Decca's very best. Once or twice balance is uncertain, in places where a woodwind solo ought to stand out clearly against its accompaniment, but does not fully do so ; the clarinet's up-and-down arpeggio a few pages into the work is nearly smothered. Yet there are no serious defects in detail, and I would not like to suggest that the version might prove anything less than satisfying for listeners who share Kubelik's rather unexciting view of the work.

There will be listeners, too, who prefer a more romantic, even at times impulsive reading, without abandoning a predisposition for leisure ; in this vein Jochum's D.G.G. version with the Berlin Philharmonic is highly successful. Yet for general purposes there is surely no need whatever to look beyond Cantelli's H.M.V. version with the Philharmonia ; this seems to me

to have all the virtues, including quite incidentally that of economy in that it is a ten-inch record. Decca's two earlier versions, too, are both still eminently serviceable: Szell's with the Concertgebouw and Böhm's with, again, the Vienna Philharmonic. M.M.

CHOPIN. Barcarolle, Op. 60. Walter Gieseking (piano).
MOZART. Piano Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491. Walter Gieseking (piano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia 33CX1526 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Concerto No. 24:
Badura-Skoda, V.S.O., Prohaska (2/54) WLP5097
Curzon, L.S.O., Krips (4/54) LXT2867
Casadesus, Orch., Szell (8/55) ABL3060
Solomon, Philh., Menges (1/56) ALP1316
Bachauer, London Orch., Sherman (9/56) DLP1124
Kirkpatrick, Orch., Jones (7/57) ALP1454
Henkemans, V.S.O., Moralt (2/58) ABL3178

This is a fine, clearly recorded version of Mozart's C minor piano concerto, and it certainly ranks among the best available even though I still prefer Solomon's for its greater immediacy. Gieseking is rather impersonal, rather short on detailed phrasing and shades of dynamics; Mozart could hardly be expected to write in every dynamic nuance to a piano part from which he himself was going to play, and so the performer must give us more than merely a faithful and accurate performance of the written notes. Nevertheless this concerto, the grandest of the whole magnificent series, is less vulnerable than most to the dangers of a dead-pan performance, and it also stands up well to the inflation involved in Karajan's use of unreduced strings. The recording engineers have done wonders in securing a clear balance of piano, wind and strings with these forces—I doubt very much whether it could sound as clear as this in the concert-hall. The only victim among the wind instruments is, occasionally, the bassoon.

Chopin's *Barcarolle* is one of those works, like the Fourth Ballade and the Polonaise-Fantasy, in which Chopin transfigures the forms of drawing-room music by sheer genius. Gieseking's performance is too laboured to do it real justice. The quieter and less taxing passages are well done but the climaxes lack fire. J.N.

DEBUSSY. La Boite à Joujoux—Children's ballet. **Printemps**—Suite symphonique. **L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande** conducted by **Ernest Ansermet.** Decca LXT5351 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

La Boite à Joujoux:
French Nat. Rad., Cluytens (10/56) 33CX1282
Printemps:
R.P.O., Irving (10/57) CLP1133

I listened to *La Boite à Joujoux* (The Toy Box) with the piano score, which includes André Hellé's delightful illustrations (how well the French do children's books). So with the stage directions and the pictures to guide me as I went along, I was enchanted. Unfortunately I was put in the position where I cannot say how much one would enjoy the music alone without such help. Edward Lockspeiser's very good sleeve note does give a detailed synopsis of the action but even so everyone knows what a frustrating business it is with any recorded ballet, trying to identify a written description of the scene with the music as it is being played.

Besides, some of the remarks in the score are themselves so charming. Hellé wrote the scenario as well as drawing the pictures but the comments on the music must be Debussy's. The "old Hindu melody" which accompanies the Elephant's Dance, for example, is described as "used for elephant taming: it must necessarily be in 5/4 time". The story concerns a toy soldier who falls in love with a doll dancer, already promised to a worthless punchinello. There is a battle in which the soldier is wounded and the doll, now deserted by punchinello, nurses the soldier and, of course, comes to love him. The final tableau shows them twenty years later, married and surrounded by a large number of progeny. The music is full of allusions to other, well-known, music.

La Boite à Joujoux was composed in piano score in 1913 and was eventually orchestrated by that most imaginative of Debussy scorers, André Caplet. *Printemps*, on the other hand, is an early work, written in Rome in 1887. Originally it included a wordless choir but here, in Henri Büsser's reorchestration, it is arranged for orchestra alone.

Both works are extremely well played and admirably recorded and the record can be recommended without hesitation, especially if you can get hold of a score of the ballet. I think Cluytens' recording of this equally good and choice can only rest on the fill-up, on his disc Caplet's orchestrated version of the *Children's Corner* suite. But Ansermet's *Printemps* supersedes the earlier record, not only in its better sound but in the authority of its performance. T.H.

DEBUSSY. La Mer. Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune.
RAVEL. Rapsodie espagnole. L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by **Ernest Ansermet.** Decca LXT5424 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

Ansermet and the Suisse Romande orchestra recorded all three of these works for Decca six years ago, though not all on one disc. They have now done them again, presumably because Decca thought they could thereby improve the quality. The result is a record to treasure. I do not remember a more sensitive and poetic performance of *L'après-midi*, and the flute-player, André Pepin, is deservedly named on the disc label. The two larger works are almost as good. I have always felt that Ravel marked the opening movement of his *Rapsodie espagnole* a shade too fast, and though it is unreasonable to complain that Ansermet follows the metronome marking, I wish this music could sound a little lazier. Ensemble is not impeccable near the start. The last movement which points forward unmistakably to the final *Danse générale* in *Daphnis and Chloe* is most exciting. I have not heard this work for some years, and I find it has worn extremely well in the interim.

La Mer has long been a speciality of this conductor. To my mind a far greater work than any that Ravel wrote for orchestra, nevertheless the scoring is much more chancy than Ravel's. It is full of tunes that are all too likely to find themselves smothered by accompanying figures. Ansermet avoids every pitfall, and gives the music a translucence it seldom has. He breaks it up more than Toscanini and most other conductors, inserting short silent pauses not marked by the composer in the first movement at figure 5 and four bars from the end, and in the last at figures 55 and 60 and elsewhere. All these breaks are effective, and it would be interesting to know if Ansermet ever asked Debussy to sanction them. The composer could hardly have failed to admire this outstandingly poetic performance.

The quality on this record is excellent. It was a surprise to hear the "cymbales antiques" tinkling with such clarity in *L'après-midi*; they seldom do so in London. But I can well believe this is how Debussy intended them to sound. Clarity is indeed one of the many virtues of this most enjoyable record. R.F.

DVORAK. Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 53.
GOLDMARK. Violin Concerto in A minor, Op. 28. Bronislaw Gimpel (violin), **Südwestfunk Orchestra, Baden-Baden,** conducted by **Rolf Reinhardt.** Vox PL10290 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Dvorak Concerto:
Martzy, R.I.A.S. Berlin, Fricsay (9/55) DGM18152

Johanna Martzy's recording of the Dvořák, which T.H. understandably greeted with great enthusiasm in these columns, takes up two sides of a twelve-inch disc. Vox, as they have shown with so much of their catalogue, believe in giving remarkable value for money, and here we have the nearly 32 minutes of the Dvořák on one side only, leaving the reverse free for another 31-minute work. Gimpel's performance is assured—super-efficient, even—and his tone ample; but, much as one may admire the infallibility of his technique, there is at the same time a lack of subtlety, and of tenderness in the slow movement, in which Dvořák was so prodigal of melodies. The orchestral playing is fair.

The question may however be permitted whether the Goldmark concerto—"fiddler's music" if ever there was—was really worth saving space for. In the absence of any other available recording—Peter Rybar's performance on Nixa is now deleted—I suppose there is a place for it, but I personally am unable to rouse much interest in this long essay in watered-down Mendelssohn; there are even a couple of effects obviously "lifted" straight from the Mendelssohn concerto. Gimpel makes several welcome cuts in the work (especially in the long-winded empty finale) and deals with all its violinistics with considerable aplomb: his tone, too, is opulent, leaving the Rybar recording far behind. But the recorded orchestral quality is poor, as it is in the Dvořák (where also there is a nasty pre-echo at the string run-up at letter A, after the

two preliminary flourishes); and if this coarseness is the result of compression, then Vox's prodigality may after all be considered misplaced. If you want the Dvořák concerto I would certainly advise taking the Martzy. L.S.

DVORAK. Slavonic Dances, Op. 46. Munich Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Fritz Rieger.** D.G.G. DG17038 (10 in., 30s. 11d.).

Complete, Opp. 46 & 72*:*
Czech P.O., Talich (10/53) LPV214-5
Philh., Malko (11/54) CLP1019-20
V.P.O., Kubelik (11/55) LXT5079-80
Op. 46 *only:*
L.P.S.O., Rodzinski (3/57) WLP20013

The 8 dances of Op. 46 complete on a 10-incher is obviously a sensible format. Most other issues spread the 16 dances of both sets over three large sides and fill the fourth with something we probably don't want. Unfortunately, performances and playing on this disc are really not distinguished enough to enable one to recommend it in face of the very high competition. Rieger goes for fast speeds at a great loss of charm and, sometimes, of that controlled sort of rhythm which makes any dance so attractive. Comparison with Talich and Kubelik, to name only the two who have the strongest claim to authenticity, makes the point inescapably obvious. The recording needs a lot of top added and then sounds very well (though balance could sometimes be clearer).

The old Talich recording will not satisfy hi-fi addicts, of course, and it is dreadfully dear (four whole 12-inch sides) but there is no doubt that it has incomparable style. Malko is good and this issue is on a cheaper label. But Kubelik seems still the best choice, both for performance and sound—if you can take a not particularly distinguished Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* for side four. T.H.

ELGAR. Enigma Variations, Op. 36.
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS. Fantasia on a theme by Thomas Tallis. Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by **William Steinberg.** Capitol P8383 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Enigma Variations :
L.S.O., Sargent (6/53) LXT2786
L.P.O., Boult (7/54) ALP1153
Philh., Weldon (12/54) 33SX1024
N.B.C. S.O., Toscanini (12/54) ALP1204
R.P.O., Beecham (8/55) (5/57) SBR6224
Hallé, Barbirolli (7/57) CCL30101
R.A.H. Orch., Elgar (7/57) ALP1464
Tallis Fantasia :
N.S.O., Collins (9/52) LXT2699
B.B.C. S.O., Sargent (6/53) BLP1019
P.P.O., Boult (7/54) NLP905
Philh., Karajan (10/54) 33CX1159
Stokowski S.O. (12/54) ALP1205

Steinberg plays this music like a thoroughly intelligent conductor who has not heard it before and has not quite had time to get into the feel of it. These are far removed from the traditional performances on which we in this country were brought up, but by no means without interest. Nevertheless I doubt if I should ever feel happy about Steinberg's changes of tempo in the finale of the *Enigma* however often I heard the record, and he makes little of the climax of "Nimrod". R.B.T. is too fast, W.N. bustles along like Mistress Quickly, Ysobel at a really funereal speed sounds strangely attractive and miraculously clear, and the 'cello variation is beautifully done. But I'd sooner hear Boult or Barbirolli do the work any day.

The Vaughan Williams is not thought quite long enough to fill a whole side in most of the rival versions. Here again Steinberg seems to be pushing the music on all the time as though he was afraid it might get boring. Consequently he misses the loveliness and grandeur of Boult's more confident and authoritative performance. The two string bands are well balanced, though the larger one never seems to play really softly. But the quality throughout this disc is strikingly good, the dynamic range remarkable, and the music always sounds vivid and exciting even when the conductor's intentions seem misdirected. R.F.

FALLA. Concerto for harpsichord, flute, oboe, clarinet, violin and 'cello.
RIETI. Partita for flute, oboe, string quartet and harpsichord obbligato.
SURINACH. Tientos for harpsichord, English horn and timpani. **Sylvia Marlowe** (harpsichord), **Concert Arts Players.** Capitol P8309 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

For every hundred who know *The Three-cornered Hat* and *El Amor Brujo* (or parts of them), there is perhaps one who knows the works of Falla's final and more austere period—the Harpsichord Concerto, the *Fantasia bética*, the puppet-opera *El Retablo de Maese Pedro*. In these, his early picturesque Hispanicism (even so, purer than that of his predecessors) had given way to a harsher, Stravinsky-influenced idiom in which the Spanish spirit was distilled to a finer essence. The writer of the sleeve-note here rightly makes the point that the Concerto represents the disciplined austerity of classical Castile as against the emotionality of gipsy Andalusia. This is, in the opinion of competent judges, the most outstanding work of Falla's late style; and it is therefore particularly good to have, at long last, a satisfactory recording of it available in this country. There have only been two previous versions issued—that by Falla himself on French Columbia, pounding away fortissimo throughout so that it wearied the ear, and that by Kirkpatrick on an American recording, where the pungent tones of the other instruments drowned the solo harpsichord. Falla demanded in his score that the harpsichord should always sound "au premier plan"; and this raises difficult problems of balance for the engineers, who have on this occasion to create a proportion between the harpsichord and the rest of the ensemble different from that which exists in real life. They bring it off very well here, on the whole, though the harpsichord level could have been just a trifle higher with advantage, particularly in the suggestion of deep bells and the bi-tonal organ effects of the impressively hieratic second movement. Miss Marlowe and the Concert Arts Players give an excellent performance—possibly a trifle cautious in tempo in the finale?—and the numerous tricky points of ensemble are brought off without a hitch.

The other two works on this disc we owe to Miss Marlowe, who commissioned them. Surinach's *Tientos* are studies in the obsessional patterns of Moorish-Spanish music, but glance back over their shoulder to Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for solo clarinet*, whose musical value they only just surpass. The Rieti *Partita*, on the other hand, is an entirely captivating, non-exotic work which deserves to find a welcome from all music-lovers. Scored for string quartet, flute and oboe with harpsichord, it contains a considerable diversity of instrumentation, and its light-hearted neoclassicism offers the pleasantest of backgrounds in which to relax. Thank Heaven for a composer of talent, resource and taste who does not think it beneath him to divert his hearers! The playing and recording are admirable. L.S.

FRANCK. Symphonic Variations for piano and orchestra. Leon Fleisher (piano), **Cleveland Orchestra** conducted by **George Szell.** Philips ABE10028 (7 in., 15s. 3½d.).

The Symphonic Variations fit most unhappily on to a 45; the music simply offers nowhere to turn, with reasonably good effect. Philips, in a self-imposed spot, choose the beginning of the slow section, ending side one by snatching the music away as 'cellos and piano reach the downbeat, starting side two by fading in a repeat of the previous two bars.

The result sounds unattractive. But so, really, does the music to some degree throughout, in that the recording lacks definition. This is a pity, for the performance is an interesting one: Szell galvanises the orchestra into a briskly alert reading, but fails (save by compulsion in an ensemble) to communicate his view of the music to the soloist. For Leon Fleisher, who plays with skill and poetry, does nevertheless have a mournful tendency to take rather more than his time when a few bars of orchestral silence give him any opportunity. The conflict of views is substantial; yet not, I think, wholly inimical to the music. Much more damage is done by the recording and the format. M.M.

GRIEG. Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 16.
SCHUMANN. Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 54. Claudio Arrau (piano), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Alceo Galliera.** Columbia 33CX1531 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Coupled as above :
Moiseiwitsch, Philh., Ackermann (2/54) CLP1008

Arrau brings a highly romantic approach to both concertos. Now this may do for Schumann (though even he can so easily be over-sentimentalised), but it certainly won't for Grieg. A Norwegian friend of mine, a very perceptive listener, used to complain that international pianists never play this work as a Norwegian knows it should go, in the treatment of its rhythms as well as with a springlike freshness of style. He would have been greatly angered by Arrau's conception—but is spared that, for he died some years ago.

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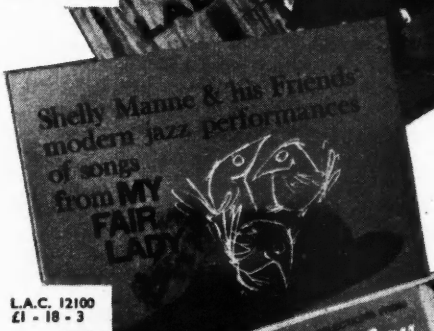

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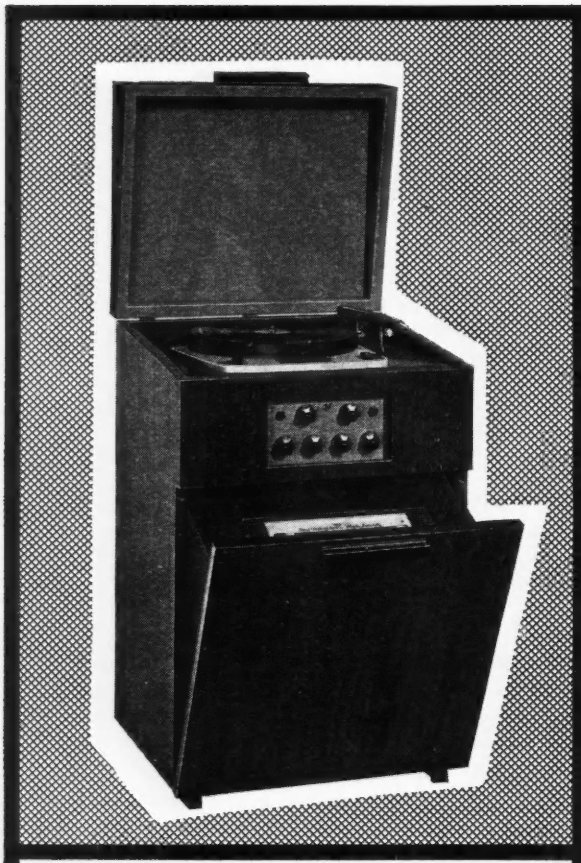

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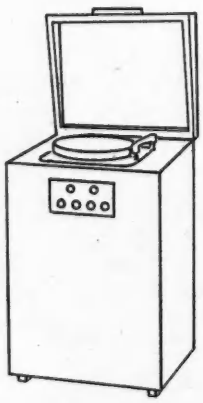

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The whole thing positively drips with teutonic romanticism. Arrau hangs about everywhere, squeezing sentiment out of every phrase. The second subject of the first movement, played too slowly by most pianists, is here intolerably protracted, the finale has no crispness and once Arrau reaches the *tranquillo* part the performance again becomes slow and overdrawn. To put on Lipatti after this is to enter a different world, and, I am positive, one much nearer Grieg's own.

Galliera, never one to keep things going, seems to be encouraged by Arrau. There are gaps between some phrases almost long enough for one to go and make a telephone call—well, a short one! And I also much dislike the effect-making that goes on when the orchestra resumes after the cadenza.

Schumann stands this treatment better, of course, but even in this concerto I like a fresher approach (but I am not prepared to lay down the law as I am over Grieg). The cadenza is superbly played and is followed by a marvellous coda. But, of course, there is magnificent playing, as such, all through the performances of both works. It would be foolish not to emphasise this. Yet the finale, for me, needs more sparkle—but I always find this a comparatively dull movement unless the soloist plays with a touch of glitter, as Rubinstein, for one, does. Rubinstein also varies his speeds considerably (and nobody would want to prohibit that in this concerto), but somehow he always manages to give a feeling of onward movement, always, at the end of some slower passage, gathering things up and reviving our spirits.

I cannot say that I recommend the alternative similar coupling and for the best of either concerto one must buy separately.

T.H.

HANDEL. Music for the Royal Fireworks—Suite transcribed Harty. **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Paul Kletzki.** Columbia SEL1576 (7 in., 18s. 1d.).

Always assuming that Handel could recognise his own music in Harty's dolled-up version for modern orchestra, he would surely have sent up a few fireworks of his own on finding that the Siciliana is broken across the two sides of this disc. That a piece which lasts all of three and a half minutes should be cut in half in this way seems to me insensitive—even on 78s we never had to put up with that. If it proved really impossible for technical reasons to get the whole of the Siciliana on to the second side, then it should either have been omitted altogether or else the suite should have been issued on one side of a 10-inch 33⅓ r.p.m. disc.

Having got that off my chest I can welcome this disc for what it is—a good but incomplete version of a work that has already been recorded more expensively in full. How I wish that, now the musical public has come to recognise Handel's greatness, the record companies would give us his entertainment music in a form more like that which he originally intended!

J.N.

HAYDN. Symphonies. No. 45 in F sharp minor, "Farewell": No. 94 in G major, "Surprise'. **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Lehmann.** D.G.G. DGM18397 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Symphony No. 45:

S.C.O., Münchinger	(7/52) LXT2669
Aldeburgh Fest., Britten	(7/57) LXT5312

Symphony No. 94:

Concertgebouw, Beinum	(6/52) LXT2686 or (1/57) LW5264
V.P.O., Furtwängler	(11/52) ALP1011
Vienna Op., Scherchen	(2/54) WLP5137
Berlin Phil., Lehmann	(10/55) DG16012
R.P.O., Beecham	(10/57) NBL5037
Hamburg R.O., Schmidt-Isserstedt	(2/58) PMC1044

The Berlin Philharmonic's excellent performance under Fritz Lehmann of the *Surprise* symphony has been issued before by D.G.G., but on that earlier occasion it was spread over two sides of a ten-inch record (DG16012). This is a somewhat inconvenient format for many buyers, and for all an expensive one (especially so, relatively, since the appearance of Decca's medium-play reissue of van Beinum's equally good version with the Amsterdam Concertgebouw orchestra). In its new spacing the D.G.G. now throws overboard all such handicaps, and, with a smooth, loving performance, and a smooth, well-balanced recording, deserves consideration alongside all the other available good *Surprises* with their alternative backings. Van Beinum, in his twelve-inch version, offers a happy performance of the Mozart 33rd Symphony in B flat (and nobody should be discouraged by the original date of 1952: new pressings sound very well); Beecham offers the Haydn 93rd Symphony in D (the Philips recording is perhaps not quite the equal of the sparkling performances); and Schmidt-Isserstedt, very well recorded, offers the Mozart *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*.

Lehmann now offers the Haydn *Farewell* Symphony, No. 45. Not, perhaps, one of Haydn's best; but I would hate to be so dastardly as to suggest that its well-known particular circumstances helped Haydn towards any intentional lapse. Yet obviously it should either not be recorded at all (that appears to have been the answer from 1952 to 1957) or recorded well; but this latter course seems to offer difficulties. Six years ago Münchinger did it for Decca, with the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra; and this remains, I think, still the most recommendable version, though of course the surface of older copies needs checking, and the backing—the Wagner *Siegfried Idyll*—presupposes a buyer of moderately comprehensive tastes. Britten's Aldeburgh orchestra also did it for Decca, in a sense; but Decca, in making a concert recording with audience effects, do seem to have aimed at capturing the situation rather than the music (and few will disagree, after all, that the situation was one well worth capturing).

But considering only Haydn and his music, even Lehmann and the Berlin Philharmonic now contrive still to disappoint. Many strings are used; this has the effect of throwing the oboes into obscurity, but not, unhappily, the principal horn, who for the greater part of the work sings out most beautifully but four times too loudly. And whatever the number of strings available, surely soloists only should be used for the end of the finale? In general the performance (between bursts of enthusiasm on the part of the principal horn) is an entirely acceptable one, and entirely acceptably recorded, if without much brilliance. But neither this, nor either of its competitors, is quite a version of the *Farewell* to be recommended without reservation.

M.M.

HAYDN. Symphony No. 104 in D major, "London".
MOZART. Symphony No. 34 in C major, K.338. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Rudolf Kempe.** H.M.V. ALP1471 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Symphony No. 104:

L.P.O., Krips	(10/52) LXT2683
Boston S.O., Munch	(9/53) ALP1061
London Mozart, Blech	(5/56) CLP1055
Berlin P.O., Rosbaud	(11/57) DGM18363
V.P.M., Horenstein	(1/58) PL9330
V.P.O., Muenchinger	(3/58) LXT5369

Symphony No. 34:

Chicago S.O., Kubelik	(5/55) ALP1239
Berlin P.O., Markevitch	(10/55) DGM18176
London Mozart, Blech	(1/56) CLP1063
V.P.O., Boehm	(3/56) LXT5111 or (8/57) LW5299

This is not the "athletic" style of Haydn-Mozart conducting but an approach that is gentle and sensitive, yet not in the least lacking in vivacity when that is called for. I enjoyed it very much indeed (and all the more on a second hearing). Kempe's approach is best heard in the *allegro* of Haydn's first movement, an easy, relaxed tempo, without ever becoming flaccid. The soft string playing he gets is lovely to hear, especially in the middle of the slow movement (a wonderful spot in this performance). Balance is good—you can hear when the oboe is playing with the violins and most wind detail is clear. Personally, I would have liked more dynamic timpani, but I know that everyone will not agree with me on that point.

This Haydn performance easily ranks with Rosbaud's (coupled with Haydn No. 92), which is a high compliment indeed. I can recommend neither above the other, only adding that perhaps Rosbaud's is here and there a little more sharply pointed, Kempe's more gentle.

The Mozart *ohne Menuett* is played without Minuet—all the rest, Kubelik excepted, insert the Minuet K.409 which Einstein suggests was later intended for this symphony. The first movement is delightfully happy and so is the spirited finale. The slow movement, beautiful as the Philharmonia strings make it sound, might have been even more beautiful at a very slightly slower speed, as one or two of the rival conductors suggest. But I think there is no better choice for this symphony than this new issue, unless you insist on the inclusion of K.409, which I certainly would not.

IMPORTANT

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I must add that though the technical part of this recording is so generally excellent, there is a dreadful cut-off of the resonance after the final chord of Mozart's first movement. T.H.

HINDEMITH. Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra. Nobilissima Visione—Suite. **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Paul Hindemith** with **Louis Cahuzac** (clarinet). Columbia 33CX1533 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Nobilissima Visione:
Philh., Klemperer (12/55) 33CX1241
Hamburg P.O., Keilberth (8/56) LGX66055

Hindemith's unbounded affection for all the orchestral instruments has compelled him to the composition of at least one sonata for each of their major representatives; but so far the canon of concertos is incomplete. In recent years, however, a major omission has been repaired by the production of this concerto for the clarinet, most widely expressive of all the wind. Repaired, too, in good measure: four symphonic movements is a generous concerto allowance.

Hindemith frames a faintly—very faintly—bees' weddingish scherzo, and a heart-warming slow movement, with an opening movement of tempered lyricism and a finale of tempered vitality. Throughout the emphasis of the solo part is on the fluency and the lyrical possibilities of the instrument, rather than on its potential ferocity; and the emotional range of the music follows suit. So does Cahuzac's playing. His fluency has never been in doubt for a moment, but not all his previous records have suggested that he is as smooth and lyrical a player as he now declares himself. The effect is achieved without even a suspicion of vibrato, a Spartan choice which might be thought to be adding unnecessarily to the difficulties of sounding lyrical on a wind instrument; but presumably the choice reflects, at some remove, Hindemith's own taste in the matter.

The Philharmonia is on form throughout; so it is for the reverse of the disc. *Nobilissima Visione*, Hindemith's ballet on the life of St. Francis, is also highly lyrical, and is among the most moving of all his music. His own conducting of it reflects these qualities; the expressiveness is complete, the urgency not always quite that communicated to the music by other conductors. The effect (which is sometimes to be observed, too, in Hindemith's conducting of the classics) must be intentional, for this composer is no beginner as a conductor in the sense that many other composers are, all their lives; indeed, it is difficult to visualise such a complete musician as ever having been a beginner at anything.

And certainly the effect is not exaggerated, for it does not in the least prevent this performance of *Nobilissima Visione* being a vital one, fully competitive with its rivals. Both these, as it happens, are also first-class; and on this occasion even consideration of the respective recordings will not help materially towards a decision between the three. For though that earlier Columbia and the Telefunken discs were, and are, of very good technical quality indeed, the new Columbia has perhaps even a slight advantage over them in that it adds to the original qualities of depth and brilliance a capacity for enlargement without a trace of distortion. Even, that is, at the very end of sides: the final G major chord of *Nobilissima Visione* rings out quite marvellously.

More likely to lead to a decision is consideration of the backings: Klemperer's Columbia offers, curiously, the Haydn-Brahms Variations; Keilberth's Telefunken the Hindemith *Symphonic Metamorphoses on themes of Weber* (highly desirable—but surely likely already to have found a place in the contemporary library as the backing, on H.M.V. ALP1251, of the only available version of Schönberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*, Op. 16). And the new disc, of course, offers the only version, and a highly authentic one, of the Hindemith Clarinet Concerto. M.M.

HOLST. St. Paul's Suite. Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Herbert Menges.** H.M.V. 7EP7054 (7 in., 12s. 10½d.).

Boyd Neel Orch. (2/51) LX3025
Philh., Weldon (11/56) 33S1100

There is perhaps something just a little incongruous about the string section of our finest orchestra bending its energies to the piece that Holst wrote for St. Paul's Girls' School; their playing is so polished that the music has slipped by almost before you know it. But the music is charming, unpretentious and (unlike some Holst) quite unproblematical. It is good to have it in such a cheap and convenient format.

E.M.I. deserve a special word of congratulation for unearthing the drawing of Holst conducting the St. Paul's orchestra that appears on the sleeve. This, and the sleeves for two other E.M.I. seven-inchers I have had for review this month are all well above the average run of sleeve-designs, being both attractive and (rarer still) appropriate. J.N.

HONEGGER. Symphony No. 5 (di tre re).

MILHAUD. Les Choéphores. Geneviève Moizan (soprano), **Hélène Bouvier** (contralto), **Heinz Rehfuss** (baritone), **Claude Nollier** (speaker), **Chorale de l'Université, Lamoureux Orchestra, Paris** conducted by **Igor Markevitch.** D.G.G. DGM18385 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

When he was twenty Milhaud sold his complete edition of Victor Hugo in order to buy one expensive work by Paul Claudel; the fervent admiration blossomed into warm friendship, a great deal of artistic collaboration, and what must have been a rewarding chapter in the history of French diplomacy. One result of the artistic collaboration was Milhaud's incidental music to *Agamemnon*, *Les Choéphores*, and *Les Euménides*, a trilogy of Claudel's based on the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus.

Milhaud, at the time, had strong views on the proper nature of theatrical incidental music, holding that the spoken word and the sound of music were on sufficiently different planes to be incompatible (the history of opera has largely been the history of attempts to resolve this conflict, instinctively felt by most audiences). As far as the *Oresteia* were concerned, Milhaud's solution was to write substantial pieces, without speech, for solo singers, chorus, and orchestra, inserting these into the dramatic action. A rare accompaniment to the spoken word, by contrast, was allotted to spoken chorus and seventeen instruments of percussion only (one classic performance of 1919 was a triumphant success: on that occasion, which must have been an enjoyable one, the percussion players included Cocteau, Auric, Poulenc, and Honegger). Another theory on which Milhaud was consciously working at the time was that of polytonality, and a great deal of the *Oresteia* music does disclose a shifting polytonal chordal accompaniment, richly scored, to a fundamentally diatonic vocal line.

D.G.G's sleeve note finds little space for details, and it may therefore be useful to set out here the sections of incidental music as far as this second of the trilogy, *Les Choéphores*, is concerned.

(1) a *Funereal Vociferation*, choir and orchestra, to accompany the entry of the Choephori bearing libations to Agamemnon's tomb. (2) *Libation*, an unaccompanied chorus (actually Milhaud's first attempt at choral polytonality). (3) an *Incantation*, sung by Electra and Orestes before Agamemnon's tomb. (4) *Présages*, and (5) *Exhortations*; two scenes of exceptional violence set, for the reasons suggested above, for spoken voices and percussion only. (6) a *Hymn to Justice* for choir and orchestra, final, in the drama, except for (7) a spoken *Conclusion*, for voices and percussion.

This spoken *Conclusion*, actually, sounds on disc remarkably inconclusive; but it is the only misfortune surrounding the undertaking. The performance is throughout wholly convincing, in every respect, allowing, in conjunction with first-class recording, a most beautiful sound to Milhaud's music.

Les Choéphores fits, unfortunately, a twelve-inch LP most unhappily, spilling over on to the second side just for the last two excerpts. This side then continues with Honegger's Symphony of 1950; his Fifth, and in the event his last. It bears the subtitle *di tre re*, the three D's referred to being the notes of the timpani ending each of the three movements. These are respectively grave, scherzoid, and savage, in each case filled with fluent music rather less thickly scored than is the case in some other of Honegger's symphonies. The first movement, in particular, is extraordinarily beautiful, but so are many of the contrasting sections in its more turbulent successors: the work as a whole is exceptionally rewarding.

As in the case of *Les Choéphores*, there is a first-class performance, and recording to match. This valuable disc at once fills, with the Honegger, a serious gap in the catalogues, and offers, with the Milhaud, a work which in the past it has been much easier to read about than to hear in performance. Both contributions are welcome ones. M.M.

LALO. Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21. SAINT-SAENS. Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28. Havanaise, Op. 83. Yehudi Menuhin (violin), **Philharmonia Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Eugene Goossens.** H.M.V. ALP1571 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Symphonie Espagnole:
Campoli, L.P.O., Beinum (7/53) LXT2801
D. Oistrakh, Philh., Martinon (5/55) 33CX1246
Gimpel Munich P.O., Rieger (5/57) DGM19071
Stern, Philadelphia, Ormandy (10/57) ABL3168

Menuhin gives a skilful and vigorous performance of the Lalo, playing in very good form: and he is extremely good in his smooth and very seductive treatment of the two Saint-Saëns pieces. He presents us, by the way, with all five movements of the Lalo, complete and uncut.

The balance puts the soloist over-near the microphone (as so often, but nobody in any of the gramophone companies seems to pay the faintest heed) and much orchestral detail goes for nothing. This is a particular loss in the finale of the *Symphonie Espagnole* where there is a great deal of imitative woodwind comment of much point and this present record is certainly the least effectively balanced of all in this movement.

Not that the accompaniments, when they emerge, turn out to be any great shakes. Sir Eugene Goossens' handling of that to the *Symphonie Espagnole* has not the distinction shown by some others who have recorded this work and while the accompaniments written for the other two works are in themselves undistinguished, he might nevertheless have brought in the orchestra in time at the top of Menuhin's run-up in the *Rondo Capriccioso*.

But those who concentrate on a virtuoso soloist's playing won't mind about such things as mere orchestral accompaniments and to them I can recommend the record, for the good value in number of works on it, as well as for its distinguished playing. I still think that Gimpel gives the most attractive account of the Lalo by far but his record is expensive, taking all of two sides. The sheer bargain—and very good playing, too—is Stern who is put by Philips on to one *side* (with Bruch No. 1 on the reverse). T.H.

LISZT. Mephisto Waltz.
WEINBERGER. Schwanda the Bagpiper: Polka and Fugue. **Munich Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Christoph von Dohnányi.** D.G.G. DG17061 (10 in., 30s. 11d.).

Excellent performances of both works and a recording that, given plenty of top, is first-rate, with a forward brilliance which D.G.G. do not always give us. Balance is good, except that trumpets are for the most part too reticent in the Weinberger pieces: one cannot really hear their *ff* interpolations in the Polka and even in the Fugue they do not always tell as effectively as they might. The big cymbal crashes in the Polka are also missing but appear in the Fugue.

With this record Christoph von Dohnányi makes an excellent recording debut and I can recommend the disc—except, perhaps, for its playing time, which is less than 10 minutes on each side. T.H.

MENDELSSOHN. Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 56. "Scotch". Overture, "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage", Op. 27. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Fernando Previtali.** H.M.V. ALP1569 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Coupled as above:
Israel P.O., Kletzki (4/55) 33CX1219
Symphony No. 3:
L.S.O., Solti (3/53) LXT2768
Vienna S.O., Klemperer (4/53) PL7080
A.B.C. Sydney S.O., Goossens (7/54) BLP1045
N.Y.P.O., Mitropoulos (4/56) ABL3082

This is a good record, though in the last resort, I think, not quite as good a one as the similar coupling on Columbia. For the "Scotch" Symphony, Previtali adopts just about the same tempi as Kletzki—sensible ones which allow the reading to have a cumulative effect. If the opening is hurried, if the peroration is not broad and majestic, the movements can seem merely a series of four picturesquely Scottish tone-pictures (this is the Solti reading on Decca). But Mendelssohn marked the movements to be played without break, and as William Mann points out in his note to the Goossens disc, the movements are linked, beyond the return of the "Holyrood" theme at the end, by the audibly perceptible and omnipresent motif of a rising fourth. Previtali, like Kletzki, reads the symphony as a whole.

Why then do I prefer the latter's performance? Partly because of a recording which seems by a little to be wider in range, sharper in definition, and more spacious in acoustic than the new one. Partly because there are more captivating details (the phrasing of the first subject in the slow movement, for example) in the Kletzki reading. Partly because the Israel Philharmonic under Kletzki seems to be a better-disciplined body than the Royal Philharmonic under Previtali: its chording in the noisy final section is more nearly in perfect tune than the British orchestra's. There is not a great deal in it at any point; but enough to add up to a definite preference. I also find more atmosphere in Kletzki's reading of the *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* Overture, even though the final rejoicing on the arrival in harbour is exuberant almost to the point of exaggeration. A.P.

MOUSSORGSKY. A Night on the Bare Mountain (orch. Rimsky-Korsakov).
TCHAIKOVSKY. Symphony No. 2 in C minor, Op. 17, "Little Russian". Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by **Carlo Maria Giulini.** Columbia 33CX1523 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Coupled as above:
Hamburg P.M., Winograd (11/57) PMC1036
Symphony No. 2:
R.P.O., Beecham (11/54) ABL3015
Paris Cons., Solti (1/57) LXT5245

I hope M.M. won't mind if I take him up on a comment he made on the Beecham performance of this symphony. He was full of praise for it, though less for the recording (and I agree) but he remarked that "Beecham gives an oddly unexciting reading of the March".

Now there are marches and marches, from light infantry to funeral. Tchaikovsky does not, in fact, call this movement a march but in his directions for playing it he does use the word *marziale*—which means no more than "with a march-like character", and Beecham gives it that. But is the movement meant to be exciting? Tchaikovsky's full direction is *andantino marziale, quasi moderato. Andantino*, unfortunately, is used by different composers in two different ways—faster or slower than *andante*. But whichever Tchaikovsky meant, it doesn't suggest an exciting march and the qualification of *moderato* emphasises this. As Beecham plays it, pretty slowly, it certainly hasn't excitement but it does have a great deal of character and it does provide the symphony with something it otherwise lacks, a slow movement. I venture to think that Beecham provides what Tchaikovsky had in mind.

Having expressed this view, I now have to confess that I am captivated by the way Giulini gets the Philharmonia to play this movement, much faster than Beecham but with such precision of playing—though it is against my better judgment. Indeed, this is an extremely good performance throughout and no praise can be too high for the orchestra's playing. Guilini's reading hasn't always the character that Beecham so magically puts into everything but it is very well conducted nevertheless. And though I prefer Beecham's second movement, his scherzo does sound sedate compared with Guilini's. The Philharmonia's playing here . . . but I must not keep on about that!

Interpretations and playing apart, the recording is good indeed and easily outpoints the Philips for Beecham. (These two conductors are the real rivals in this symphony). In addition, on the new record, you get the Moussorgsky orgy. This is also included on the Winograd disc (the others take all of both sides for Tchaikovsky) but the frenetic performance of the Philharmonia makes it easily the winner.

A strongly recommended disc. T.H.

SCHUMANN. Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia 33C1056 (10 in., 30s. 11½d.).

Philh., Cantelli (5/54) BLP1044
Berlin P.O., Furtwaengler (7/55) DG16063
Israel P.O., Kletzki (4/57) 33CX1419
P.P.O., Boult (7/57) NCT17007
L.S.O., Krips (2/58) LXT5347

Karajan has obviously thought out his interpretation of this symphony most carefully—how he can give it with the greatest effect. This leads him into some interpretative touches, most of which are acceptable enough (though other conductors have won our hearts without finding them necessary) but of which two are less welcome.

The *rallentando* and overdone phrasing of the last bar of the slow movement's opening tune will probably not worry many of us unduly but the treatment of the finale's second subject is another matter. Karajan sets out on the movement at a brisk speed but before many bars have passed the music begins to slow up. I could not for the moment imagine what was happening and had not the pitch remained firm I should have looked to my motor. But then the intention becomes clear. We are being led into a much slower speed for the coming

tune. All this happens a second time in the movement, of course, and I found it most unpleasant.

For the rest, the playing of the Berlin Philharmonic is good and I liked the full-blooded treatment of the first movement, in which Karajan rightly does the repeat (though here, too, the *p dolce* phrases are slightly slowed), the beautiful playing in the slow movement and the excellent scherzo. For one touch of Karajan imagination I have nothing but praise—the change of Schumann's *poco ritenuto* at the end of the scherzo into a *molto ritenuto*, with a *diminuendo* to the utmost softness and a start of the finale which continues the mood. This is magical.

Though there is so much in both playing and recording that is good, I really cannot recommend a performance that upsets the last movement so unwarrantably. If you want the symphony done complete on a 10-inch disc, Cantelli and Boult are both very good, Cantelli's being a particularly well-judged reading, beautifully played, while Krips, on a 12-inch, couples it with an equally happy performance of the same composer's 1st Symphony. T.H.

SIBELIUS. Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43. N.W.D.R. Symphony Orchestra of Hamburg conducted by **Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt.** Parlophone PMC1054 (12 in., 35s. 10d.).

SIBELIUS. Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 43. Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by **Eugene Ormandy.** Philips ABL3214 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

L.S.O., Collins	(10/53) LXT2815
Hallé, Barbirolli	(5/54) ALP1122
Philh., Kletzki	(6/56) 33CX1332
N.B.C. S.O., Stokowski	(4/57) ALP1440

On the new Philips disc Ormandy gives a forceful reading of the symphony, allowing little of the tremendous impulse of the music to escape him. In this the orchestra support him well, and the result is a dramatic performance. A full weight of string tone is in evidence throughout, and in the studio this must have contributed to an extremely satisfying overall sound.

Yet as recorded it is the overall sound that is not quite the equal of the very good intentions of its originators. It is all there, but is lacking in perspective: the quieter moments sound well—save for a slightly obtrusive degree of background murmur from time to time—but the louder moments do to some extent lack definition. Thus in the case of the brass the first trumpet plays his lyrical solos most beautifully (and here the engineers do secure a miraculous balance with the antiphonal flute solos), but the same player leading his section does not in the recorded result seem to be able to sweep all the strings from before him. This he occasionally should; though admittedly he is not assisted from behind by a somewhat backwardly balanced trombone section.

On the other hand the recorded quality of the new Parlophone disc is exceptionally good, with an emphasis, in loud moments as well as soft, on clarity. In the case of the timpani there is in fact greater clarity than I can recall ever hearing on disc before, considerably greater than is often the case in the concert hall. The note tells, at whatever dynamic level it may be played; and its pitch (an infallible one: the Hamburg player is a first-class timpanist) sings out miraculously. Thus the new timpani part to the end of the finale is doubly effective (had this revision, now often heard, Sibelius's authority ?—I do not know, and would much like to); and the slow movement, too, gains in many passages. The opening of this movement gains also from the care taken by the 'cellos and basses to avoid using open strings in the pizzicato passages. This is only symptomatic of the extreme care in performance that has been taken throughout; and the result is rewarding.

Schmidt-Isserstedt for much of the time concentrates on the spaciousness of the music rather than its impulse; and this might conceivably be held to rob the first movement, and perhaps the finale too, of some small degree of their potential excitement. But the Scherzo is as exciting as can be; and in any event the view taken of the symphony is an eminently reasonable one.

This reading, allied to the excellent qualities of both the performance and the recording are sufficient to make the new Parlophone version of this symphony a formidable one, even before taking into consideration its inexpensiveness. Yet there is just that extra fire in Kletzki's performance with the Philharmonia, and a fraction of extra warmth (not clarity) in the recorded sound, that must make that marvellous Columbia version seem something like irresistible nor, would it be reasonable to suggest that Collins's fine Decca record was yet outdated. M.M.

TCHAIKOVSKY. Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23. José Iturbi (piano), **Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Colonne** conducted by **José Iturbi.** Columbia 33CX1525 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

TCHAIKOVSKY. Piano Concerto No. 1 in B flat minor, Op. 23. Svjatoslav Richter (piano), **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Karel Ancerl.** Supraphon LPV242 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Curzon, New S.O., Szell	(1/51) LXT2559
Solomon, Philh., Dobrowen	(10/52) CLP1001
Anda, Philh., Galliera	(11/54) 33CX1156
Uninsky, Hague P.O., Otterloo	(3/55) ABR4020
Cherkassky, Berlin P.O., Ludwig	(5/55) (8/57) DGM18013
Bachauer, London Orch., Sherman	(9/55) CLP1049
Badura-Skoda, P.P.O., Boult	(7/56) NCL16013
Katchen, L.S.O., Gamba	(8/56) LXT5164
Gilels, Chicago S.O., Reiner	(11/56) ALP1402
Bianca, Hamburg P.M., Walther	(12/57) PMC1034
Malcuzynski, French R.O., Malko	(12/57) 33CX1481
Bruchollerie, Vienna M.P.O., Moralt	(5/58) PL10350

The Tchaikovsky, you might well think, would be an unlikely concerto for the soloist to essay in a double role; even a conductor without pianistic worries usually has his hands full. Yet, unlikely or no, the curious fact is that Iturbi the conductor does secure nearly everywhere an extremely good rapport between the Parisian orchestra and Iturbi the pianist. In order to secure this it may have been that a great many retakes were necessary; certainly a great—far too great—number of tape-joins are audible in the finished result. Nor, unfortunately, are they the only defect of the recording, which throughout, is thin and dull. Often, too, an orchestral wind solo fails to tell; here, perhaps, the lack of a guiding non-pianistic hand is clearer than in any other way. In the circumstances it will probably be of small interest that Iturbi in fact plays the solo part well, though taking an unusually restrained view of the opening movements.

Poor recording, though in a rather different way, mars the new Supraphon version of the concerto with Richter. Here the sound is not thin and dull, but instead thick and dull; there is no shortage of middle or bottom, but there most certainly is of top. This is a great pity, for both Richter and the Czech Philharmonic give a marvellous performance. There is glitter and to spare in the reading of the solo part (alas! not in its recorded sound), and poetry in the shaping of every phrase; seldom can the notes of the cadenzas have been so mastered that their musical shape has been projected so clearly, seldom can the scherzo section of the slow movement have sounded so entirely elfin. The orchestra, too, is as pointed as possible, and Ancerl secures a perfect partnership with Richter.

The recording, nevertheless, does at least offer a good balance between soloist and orchestra, and the performance is so luminous that many listeners may feel that it justifies overlooking the prevailing dullness of sound (or they may own equipment which is itself happily ready to overlook this). Yet other luminous performances are available that do in reality sound so very much better: Solomon's for H.M.V.; Anda's for Columbia (with the Delibes-Dohnányi *Coppélia* waltz thrown in); and Cherkassky's for D.G.G. These three are, I think, the best. Seeking some measure of economy involves also, unfortunately, accepting some measure of comparative sobriety in the performance: even so there is little wrong, intrinsically, with Katchen's Decca version of the Tchaikovsky (offering also the Liszt *Hungarian Fantasia*), or Uninsky's ten-inch Philips. Still further economy, even in the reasonable cause of conveniently one-sided versions, is not really in the case of this concerto to be recommended; for choice then lies only between Sandra Bianca's tamely recorded Parlophone version (with the Grieg Concerto) and Monique de la Bruchollerie's harshly recorded Vox version (with the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, a disc discussed in this month's Classical Reissues column). M.M.

WAGNER. Die Walküre: Ride of the Valkyries; Wotan's Farewell and Magic Fire Music. **Siegfried:** Forest Murmurs. **Götterdämmerung:** Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey; Siegfried's Funeral Music and Closing Scene. **Cleveland Orchestra** conducted by **George Szell.** Fontana CFL1012 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

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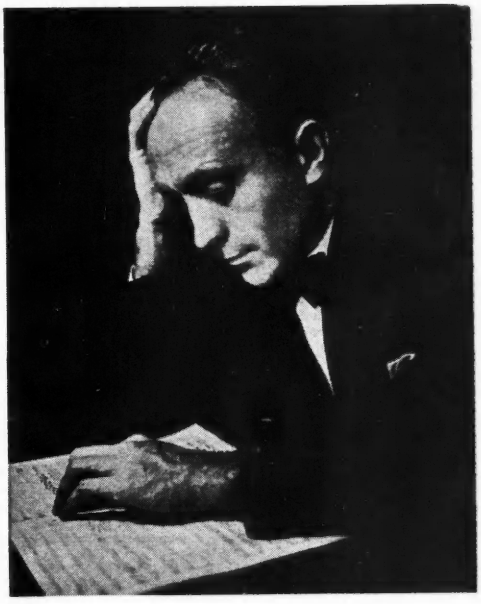

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BIZET : Carmen Suite/**TCHAIKOVSKY :** Capriccio Italien —Beecham	KFR4001	25/4½
BRAHMS : Symphony No. 1, C minor. Philharmonia—Klemperer	CX1504	41/8½
BRAHMS : Symphony 2 & Tragic Ovt. Philharmonia—Klemperer	CX1517	41/8½
BRITTEN : Young Persons Guide/**PROKOVIEV :** Peter & the Wolf. C. Ormandy	ABL3193	41/9
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I have always admired Szell but have in the past wondered if he hadn't a slight deficiency of real warmth in his make-up ; but the human feeling behind his recent fine recording of the *Eroica*, and now the warmth and glow of this Wagner suggest that if it were so, it is true no longer. Fontana's recording (or whichever firm really made it !) is just right for Wagnerian sound and, in fact, those impenitent sinners among us who are perfectly prepared to enjoy orchestral excerpts will be glad to have this record.

(Incidentally, orchestral chunks of Wagner, whatever may be said against them, may well start the Wagner fire in the young, who might be deterred by a whole Act on a record or, even more, by a whole opesa in the theatre). T.H.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BACH. Brandenburg Concertos. No. 3 in G major, BWV1048: No. 5 in D major, BWV1050: No. 6 in B flat major, BWV1051. **Concerto for two violins in D minor, BWV1043. Philomusica of London** directed by **Thurston Dart** (harpsichord) with Cecil Aronowitz and Rosemary Green (violas), Desmond Dupré and Dennis Nesbitt (viole da gamba), Bernard Richards ('cello), Nigel Amherst (double bass), Richard Adeney (flute), Granville Jones and Carl Pini (violins). London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50160 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.). The 6th Brandenburg Concerto is actually contained in OL50159 reviewed below.

The Philomusica face-lifting technique, already applied to the Bach Orchestral Suites with varying degrees of success, has now been used on the Brandenburg Concertos and the D minor Concerto for two violins. The Double Concerto exists in several good versions already, the best (in my opinion) being the disc made by Oistrakh senior and junior ; this new performance by Granville Jones and Carl Pini is good and meticulous, though there is little to be said in favour of yet another version of this much-recorded work. Tempi are on the rapid side, and this is especially noticeable in the slow movement, where something of the lyrical and pastoral elements is wanting. The two violinists are well endowed with taste, tone and technique, and they blend well besides displaying constant evidence of a true feeling for ensemble. The use of a small chamber organ as an orchestral continuo is an excellent idea, marred only by the too reticent anonymity of the player.

In the Brandenburg Concertos the style is so highly polished that you can practically see your face in it. None of these chamber orchestra performances of No. 6 : they are now as out-of-date as the 80-piece symphony orchestra versions of twenty years ago. This performance whittles the chamber orchestra down to chamber music, with one instrument only to each part, so that for this concerto at least the Philomusica of London consists of only seven players : two violas, two gambas, a 'cello, a double-bass, and a harpsichord. In case you are already feeling that you won't be getting your money's worth, let me advise you to hear the record before deciding one way or the other.

I doubt whether you will ever hear such clarity and transparency in the part-writing, and I doubt whether any other recording at present available would give you quite the same tone-colours. These were important to Bach ; and that is why he wrote each of his six concertos for a different combination of instruments. The violas have the most interesting and most difficult parts, admirably played on this disc by Cecil Aronowitz and Rosemary Green. I like the vigorous pulse and tempo of the first movement : as with the Prelude to *Das Rheingold*, it stays on the same chord for a very long time, and a brisk though not hurried tempo is a great help.

The third Brandenburg is once again played by solo instruments, after the manner of No. 6. Here we have a nine-part string ensemble, three each of violins, violas and 'cellos, with the usual double-bass and harpsichord continuo. Once again the effect is refreshing and full of clarity : the players are nimble, well drilled, and sensitive to the complex interplay of one group with another. As a slow movement, Granville Jones plays an *Andante* taken from a little-known work for violin and harpsichord, (BWV1021). Two chords usually played in meaningless fashion between the two quick movements make a convincing cadence for the violin solo, and lead naturally into the finale.

Thurston Dart, Richard Adeney, and Granville Jones are the soloists in No. 5, and their performance is as spirited in the outside movements as it is poetic in the slow movement. Ornaments are played in a natural and altogether persuasive fashion, and though at times one feels Dart to be the weak member of the team, he makes up in imagination for what he lacks in technique. I must delay a more thorough discussion of these recordings until the series is completed, which I understand will be soon. D.S.

BACH. Orchestral Suites. No. 3 in D major, BWV1068: No. 4 in D major, BWV1069. **Philomusica of London** directed by **Thurston Dart** (harpsichord). London L'Oiseau-Lyre OL50159 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.). This disc also contains the Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 reviewed above.

Orchestral Suites—complete :

Philh., Klemperer	(4/55) 33CX1239–40
R.C.A.S.O., Reiner	(10/56) ALP1382–3
Concertgebouw, Beinum	(10/56) ABL3136–7

Last month I promised a fuller review of these new discs of Bach's orchestral Suites (or, as he called them, *Ouvertures*) and now that the second disc is issued it will be well worth comparing Dart's interpretation with the other three. Playing over the Reiner and van Beinum sets, and reading what M.M. had to say about them in 1956, convinces me that there is more than ample room for this new version, which has been well recorded and stylishly performed. Londoners who often have the chance of seeing the Philomusica will know that it is basically a small group, perhaps one-fifth of the size of the Philharmonia or the Concertgebouw orchestras, and half the size of the R.C.A. group that Reiner conducts. The result from the recording point of view is obvious : in the Philomusica discs the texture is light and transparent, the polyphony of luminous clarity, and the balance as natural as one could wish for. The acoustic is resonant and sympathetic without being too prone to echo, and the interplay between woodwind, brass and string works out nearly everywhere in a highly satisfactory manner.

The Philharmonia recording proved unsatisfactory from several points of view, for the interpretation was generally poor and the whole impression one of gargantuan orchestral sonorities, more apt for Wagner or Richard Strauss than for J. S. Bach. These faults are made all the more apparent when the Columbia discs are played in comparison with the Oiseau-Lyre pair. Reiner's set is better than Klemperer's, for he has the advantage of an orchestra of more manageable proportions. But Reiner's discs were made in America, and the studio used on this occasion seems rather dead compared to the sound we are accustomed to hear in our domestic recordings. To be sure, Reiner gets a crisp and often pleasing effect from his expert players, but the sound in general is too forward for comfort. The best kind of acoustic to simulate eighteenth-century performance conditions, which were usually reliant on large and sparsely-furnished halls, is one with a two- to three-second reverberation.

The Concertgebouw acoustic is admirable for this kind of recording, but unfortunately the orchestra is too large and (as M.M. remarked) the performances too unimaginative and pedestrian. Dart's versions score on the first round ; the question is, are his interpretations too erratic to be acceptable, his tempi too strange to be supported by our over-conservative ears ? I think that sometimes they are : but in many instances his modifications of " accepted " tempi bring the music to life in a way that I have rarely heard before. The only really unacceptable tempi are those of the slow introductions and postludes to the French Overtures that begin each of the four Suites. Quantz and other theorists and practitioners of music in the eighteenth century tell us that a French Overture should be a pompous, magnificent work to begin with, for this was a tradition going right back to the time of Lully, and of Johann Sigismund Kusser (or Cousser), who lived from 1660 to 1727 and was the first German composer to adopt the French style in orchestral music. He was followed by Georg Muffat and Johann Fischer, by the even more gifted Ferdinand Fischer, and naturally by a host of smaller imitators who went through the same motions but produced music of undoubtedly less value.

All these works, however, had one thing in common—the French Overture. The dances following the overture were never standardised—they are certainly not consistent even in Bach's four suites—and they were not meant to be danced to. In his sleeve note, Dart expresses the opinion

(without, however, giving accurate evidence in the case of these present compositions) that the dances were intended for use at a court ball. The music is nevertheless far too complex polyphonically ever to have been of the slightest use as dance music proper, but if once it is admitted to be dance music, then the keyboard suites and overtures and partitas must also be similarly categorised. In fact, Bach thought of these dances as abstract orchestral music, as a light contrast to the solemnity and learned manner of the overtures. He no more expected people to dance to his bourrées than Haydn expected people to dance to the minuets in his symphonies.

This terpsichorean theory may therefore have dictated the occasional odd tempi in the dances, but the rapidity of the solemn introductions still remains a problem. These may be faults, and in the ears of some listeners serious ones, but I must admit that I would prefer the fine playing and recording of the Oiseau-Lyre set, and its admirable treatment of ornamentation and double-dottings, to any of the other three. Once more, then, it is only fair to admit that the last word has still to be said in the recording of these four Suites, but Dart's challenge to other conductors will not, I hope, go entirely unnoticed. D.S.

BARTOK. Sonata for two pianos and percussion. Carl Seeman, Edith Picht-Axenfeld (pianos), **Ludwig Porth, Karl Peinkofer** (percussion).
STRAVINSKY. Concerto for piano and wind instruments (1924). Carl Seeman (piano), **Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Thomas Scherman.** D.G.G. DGM18384 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Bartok Sonata:	
Picht-Axenfeld, Seeman	(11/56) DG16021
Parry, Loveridge	(1/57) RG89
Brendel, Schuster	(5/57) PL9600
Stravinsky Concerto:	
Magaloff, Suisse, Ansermet	(10/56) LXT5154

Of the two recordings on this disc, the Stravinsky is new to the catalogue, while the Bartók is a recoupling of a ten-inch disc I reviewed eighteen months ago. I then complained that, good though the performance was, it was expensive at thirty shillings or so. As one side of a twelve inch disc it becomes a much more economical proposition and though both works on this disc are tough nuts they are, I think, worth the cracking. I need say no more of the Bartók except that it is a much meatier work than the Stravinsky, and for me a more interesting one. The Stravinsky, for some reason, is recorded at a much higher level. It dates from 1923 and is in the composer's neo-Bach vein. Long stretches of the music seem completely drained of emotion ; Stravinsky doodles on with his spiky, and rather aimless, counterpoints and often nasty harmonies, till one wonders what the point of it all can be. Then you put the record on again, and the music begins to come alive ; not all of it, but enough to make listening worth while. The slow movement is full of beauties, the section between the two cadenzas quite ravishing, and the fugato near the end of the finale is positively exhilarating. Some of the piano writing in this finale shows jazz influence and cyclic touches to some extent bind the work together. This said, I must confess to finding most of the first movement too arid for my taste even after three hearings. This is not difficult music like the closely-knit first movement of the Bartók ; I doubt if it would wear well. Curiously enough there seems to be no full score available ; only a two-piano version.

Seeman has a good grasp of the music, though neither he nor the conductor have quite the authority and assurance of Magaloff and Ansermet on the Decca version. The recording is good. R.F.

BEETHOVEN. Sonata No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2.
BRAHMS. Sonata No. 2 in A major, Op. 100. Gioconda de Vito (violin), **Tito Aprea** (piano). H.M.V. ALP1521 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

An Italian view of these two fine sonatas comes as a pleasant change from Teutonic ones, either by origin or by derivation, and when the duettists have perfected their ensemble as de Vito and Aprea have, the view is that much more enjoyable. De Vito is not the most subtle of violinists, but she is able to draw a melodic line of firm and massive strength such as Beethoven's C minor Sonata requires, and the next minute to infuse a sunny warmth into Brahms's irresistible slow movements. Her partner has a good dynamic and tonal range, is obviously sympathetic to the music, and possesses enough personality to lend real power to the interpretations without taking too much of the limelight. Acoustically the balance is excellent, and the interplay between the two instruments can be clearly heard at all times.

Occasionally Aprea's left hand is not quite crisp enough, as in the important passage in the first movement of the Beethoven Sonata, when the opening phrase is used as an ostinato bass. His right hand, however, can be too crisp, as in the remarkably unpoetic turn at the first cadence of the slow movement, just before the violin's first entry. De Vito disappoints us slightly here, where there is more need for a genuinely lyrical line, a more flexible cantilena. Her left hand, surprisingly agile when need be, sometimes spoils a phrase through an uncomfortable change of position. The scherzo is deftly played, though Aprea has a habit of playing crush-notes as if they were discords : the unessential note is either not released quickly enough, or not at all. In the finale both players are on top of their form, and the whirlwind-like peroration is magnificently done.

Although Brahms wrote his A major Sonata in Switzerland, he knew Italy well, and would surely have given a special welcome to this Italian view of his *amabile* and *cantabile* themes. The work seems to suit the players beautifully, and they lavish on it a freedom of expression which is denied them by the relatively classical aspect of Beethoven. In the first movement, the opening theme sings out wonderfully, so much so that when the second tune arrives —an enchantingly angular creation—we long for a more delicately shaped line, with more poise and flow to it. Yet the rest of the movement is extremely well done, and the pathos of the coda sounds as appealing as ever it could. Both players infuse the fickle middle movement with serenity and playfulness by turns, quickly catching the changing moods and tempi, and echoing each other's phrases with expert understanding. The finale is equally (perhaps even more) successful, for the warm qualities come to the surface again, and the work is made to end in a blaze of musical sunlight. This disc may be highly commended to all sonata-lovers. D.S.

BEETHOVEN. Violin Sonatas. No. 1 in D major, Op. 12, No. 1 : No. 4 in A minor, Op. 23 : No. 5 in F major, Op. 24, "Spring". **Arthur Grumiaux** (violin), **Clara Haskil** (piano). Philips ABL3204 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

This seems to me an outstandingly successful record. The playing has intelligence and beauty and a real chamber music quality ; by which I mean that the two artists give the impression of playing for pleasure rather than to impress a large audience. There are one or two trifling imperfections in the recording which I had better mention ; some pre-echo, most noticeable before the finale of the "Spring" sonata, a somewhat woolly piano tone, aud what appeared to be variation in quality, such as might have been caused by editing together two versions recorded with slightly differing balances. There is one such change in quality, or so it seemed to me, some three-quarter way through the finale of the " Spring " sonata. And did I hear a not-wholly-successful tape join just before the first double bar in the A minor ? I must quickly add that none of these things worried me. More important is the very high standard of the playing. This is the best performance of the " Spring " sonata I have heard on disc. The Heifetz version of this work is a failure, on account of his perverse tempi. Grumiaux and Haskil find the only tempo at which the very chancy slow movement will come off, and they make it sound great music (and usually it sounds nothing of the sort). The scherzo is delicious, and the outside movements as tender as one could wish. Clara Haskil plays the repeated note theme in the finale with absolute mastery.

They also make the slow movement of the A minor sound a much better movement than it usually seems. This opens side two, the " Spring " and the first movement of the A minor filling side one. Perhaps Grumiaux lacks the streamlined virtuosity Heifetz shows in the outside movements of the D major, but he gives a lovely performance of the variations. I thought it musically a mistake to omit the second repeat in Variations I and II, as this repeat is obligatory in the following variation, where it is written out. Probably someone was aware of the slight deterioration in quality at the end of this very long side, and wished to minimise this as far as possible. Incidentally, the playing of Variation II is one of the highlights of the record. R.F.

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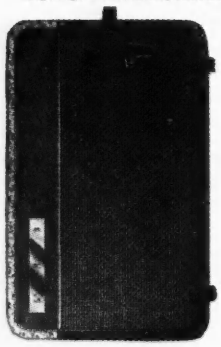

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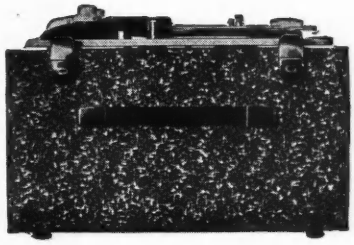

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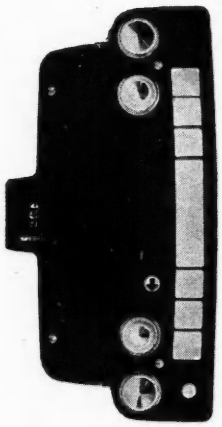

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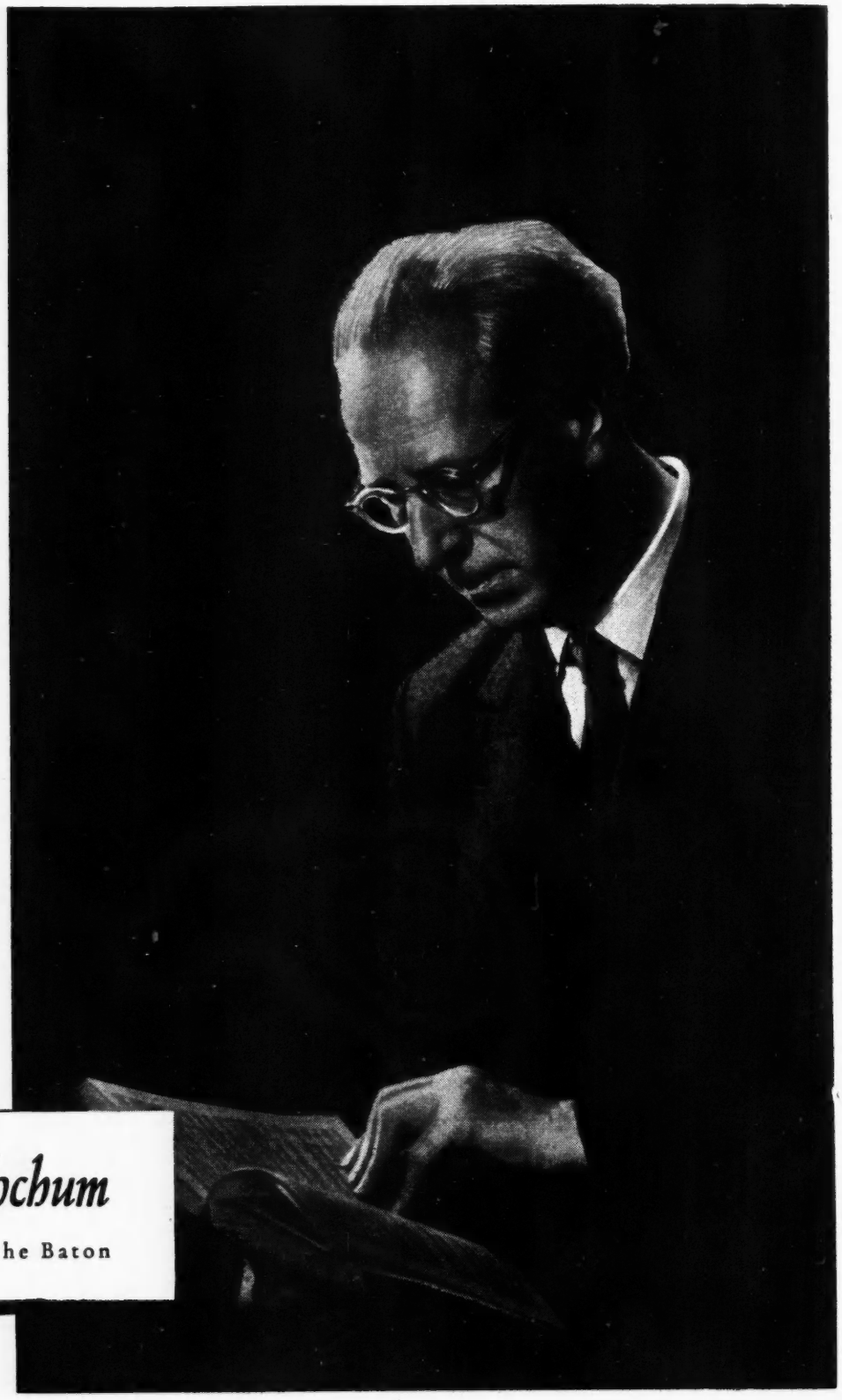


Eugen Jochum

A Master of the Baton

BEETHOVEN. 'Cello Sonata No. 3 in A major, Op. 69. Seven Variations on the duet "Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen" from *The Magic Flute*. **Enrico Mainardi** ('cello), **Carlo Zecchi** (piano). D.G.G. DGM18353 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

'Cello Sonata :

Piatigorsky, Solomon	(1/58) ALP1346
Starker, Bogin	(7/53) PLP560
Gendron, Francaix	(3/55) DTL93036
Nelsova, Balsam	(3/57) LXT5268

If it is true that the first few seconds of an LP disc constitute the most important part of the record, then this D.G.G. issue is a most unfortunate failure. Certainly beginnings are important; if we hear something fine or striking, we look forward with acute pleasure to the next 25 minutes. But here I submit that the way Mainardi plays the opening solo of the A major sonata gives us little encouragement.

Admittedly this solo has its problems, and, as M.M. and R.F. have hinted, Nelsova and Piatigorsky respectively are not entirely successful in their solutions. Part of the problem is psychological, for the 'cellist begins "cold" with a tune that should be warm, sunny and optimistic. Of course, the simple solution is to re-record the opening at the end of the session, when everybody is well and truly warmed up. The Gendron-Françaix recording is spoilt by poor surface and a heavy background hum, so that we have to fall back on Starker-Bogin, still a fine performance in spite of its years, and not too badly recorded even though the piano is slightly prominent.

Returning to the D.G.G. disc, Mainardi is poorly supported by his partner, Carlo Zecchi. The opening of the second movement suggests to me that this music, even at the slow speed chosen, is beyond Zecchi's physical capabilities. The only possibly good feature of this disc lies in the presence of a hitherto unrecorded set of Variations, which date from 1801 and are not among Beethoven's best works. Looking back over this sad Beethoven-'cello-sonata situation, I cannot help regretting that the one man who plays them better than anybody else has never been asked to record them. I refer to Pierre Fournier. D.S.

BEETHOVEN. String Quartet No. 7 in F major, Op. 59, No. 1. Koeckert String Quartet. D.G.G. DGM18365 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Italian Quartet	(9/54) LXT2856
Hungarian Quartet	(2/55) 33CX1203
Budapest Quartet	(5/57) ABR4055

This supremely beautiful quartet seems to bring out the best in the players who tackle it, and the Koeckert Quartet, like their rivals, have produced a splendid record. They are balanced nearer to the microphone than the Hungarian or Budapest Quartets, and I did wonder once or twice whether the leader was a little too close. This apart, the quality is superb, and surfaces silent. The dynamic range is unusually wide, and this is to the credit not only of the engineers, but of the players themselves, who interpret Beethoven's expression marks with more emphasis than is usual. Occasionally contrasts in volume were almost excessive. The players lack the sheer expertise that the Hungarians bring to their performances, and in the scherzo the leader's rhythm is not quite assured here and there. Nevertheless this is a distinguished performance of great beauty, and it seems almost churlish to mention that the excellent version by the Budapest Quartet costs ten shillings less. R.F.

HAYDN. String Quartets. No. 57 in G major, Op. 54, No. 1: No. 65 in B flat major, Op. 64, No. 3. **Amadeus String Quartet** (Norbert Brainin, Siegmund Nissel, Peter Schidlof, Martin Lovett). H.M.V. ALP1579 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

The section on Haydn quartets in the Classical Record Catalogue published by this journal makes sad reading. "Opus 50: No recording. Opus 55: No Recording. Opus 71: No Recording. Opus 74: No Recording". These opus numbers represent not single works but whole sets of quartets. At least from Opus 20 onwards all Haydn's quartets are mature, inventive and fascinating, and we should have forty-five four-movement examples in the catalogue from which to choose. In fact there are eleven, five of these from the last eight. The middle period quartets are woefully represented.

I am told that people won't buy discs of these quartets, and that gramophone companies cannot afford to record them. I find their alleged unpopularity incomprehensible. To me they are the ideal late night listening. They are not in the least "difficult", in the sense that some of Beethoven's are difficult, and yet they are highly original, constantly disarming the ear with the unexpected at its most charming. They are immensely civilised and often witty, and they never disappoint (as Haydn's middle period symphonies and piano sonatas sometimes do). It is fantastic that they should be so ignored when companies are prepared to issue Vivaldi concertos by the dozen.

In 1955 the Amadeus gave us Opus 54, No. 2 in C, a wonder of a work. On their new disc they play its next-door neighbour in G which is almost as good. Any student who wants to confound his professor with an example of sonata form for which no text book makes provision might like to consider the first movement of this quartet. The slow movement is magical, with a passage that suggests Haydn had just been listening to the slow introduction to Mozart's "Dissonance" quartet, K.465. The minuet is in five-bar rhythm, and the finale has some unobtrusive thematic links with what has gone before; for instance the bar after the second double-bar is almost the same as that after the first double-bar in the opening movement. The B flat quartet on the other side was written a year or two later just before Haydn made his first trip to London. It is very seldom played and its choice shows a sense of adventure on someone's part. The first movement is not especially interesting, but the others are splendid. The delicious syncopated trio, and the astonishing modulations in the finale whenever the slower theme in minims is introduced would alone make this record worth buying.

The Amadeus play these two immensely enjoyable works with great sparkle and finesse; also with evident pleasure. The recording is first-rate. I fervently hope that enough people buy this disc to encourage H.M.V. to record some more Haydn quartets with the same players; lots more. R.F.

MANFREDINI. Twelve Concerti, Op. 3. No. 1 in F major; No. 5 in D minor; No. 9 in D major; No. 7 in G major; No. 3 in E minor; No. 8 in F major (PL242-1): No. 11 in C minor; No. 4 in B flat major; No. 6 in D major; No. 12 in C major; No. 2 in A minor; No. 10 in G major (PL242-2). **I Musici Virtuosi di Milano** with **Renato Biffoli** and **Giuseppe Magnani** (violins) conducted by **Dean Eckertsen.** Vox PL242-1/2 (two 12 in., 83s. 9d.).

This set exemplifies most of the vices of Vox's baroque albums and few of their compensating virtues. In the first place the music, for all the high claims Mr. Eckertsen makes for it in his accompanying booklet, is in general not very interesting. Even Vivaldi quite often falls a victim to the clichés of his period and environment, and Manfredini is no Vivaldi: he lacks both the melodic originality and the breadth of invention, the capacity to think in paragraphs. As one might expect, the concertos in E minor and C minor (III and XI of the set) are the most interesting, because these keys are traditionally associated in Italian music of the time with dramatic expressiveness and consequently involve the most interesting set of associated clichés; others seem to me frankly dull. Perhaps the most satisfactory movements are those where Manfredini eschews the grand manner and writes in the most unpretentious vein; a good example is the gavotte which ends the F major concerto (No. 1).

The danger of including some dull music is inherent in the system of recording complete sets of works as published, and presumably Vox have decided that it is outweighed by their educational value. That may be so, but the performances on this disc are not sufficiently polished, or sufficiently well recorded, to give much pleasure to the listener uninterested in self-improvement. I Musici Virtuosi di Milano are not as expert a band as either of those which their name recalls, namely I Musici and the Virtuosi di Roma, though they share their energetic approach to classical Italian music. Intonation is not impeccable, and this gives some of the frequent unison passages a scrawny sound. The recording in any case is harsh and shrill. The continuo-player sounds singularly uninspired, but this is not really his fault as the booklet informs us that he is playing a fully composed part by Mr. Eckertsen. And it is presumably at Mr. Eckertsen's door that we must lay the lack of dynamic nuance, the unsubtle phrasing and the perfunctory endings that characterise much of these two discs.

It is possible (though I have made allowance for it) that I may have been prejudiced against Mr. Eckertsen by his accompanying booklet on Manfredini's Op. 3. There is no reason why conductors should be expected to write well about music, I suppose, but this is an embarassing production. It combines special pleading for Manfredini and naive analytical notes on these concerti with an inaccurate account of the few facts known about his life. Francesco Manfredini is a pretty obscure figure but even so it is rather painful to have Mr. Eckertsen explain to us that in Italian Munich and Monaco are both called " Monaco ", and then triumphantly plump for the wrong one as his protégé's place of employment. This set can be recommended only to the most fervid baroque enthusiasts. J.N.

MOZART. Sonatas for Organ and Orchestra. No. 16 in C major, K.329: No. 7 in F major, K.224: No. 17 in C major, K.336: No. 5 in F major, K.145: No. 12 in C major, K.263: No. 13 in G major, K.274: No. 3 in D major, K.69: No. 8 in A major, K.225: No. 11 in D major, K.245: No. 9 in G major, K.241: No. 4 in D major, K.144. **E. Power Biggs** (organ), **Camerata Academica, Salzburg,** conducted by **Bernhard Paumgartner.** Philips ABL3190 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

Nos. 1-17:
Elsasser, Hamburg Chmbr., Winograd (12/57) PMC1041-2

Nos. 1-8, 10, 11 *and* 13-17:
Holderlin, Sudwestfunk Chmbr., Reinhardt (1/58) PL9980

This disc contains eleven of Mozart's seventeen one-movement organ sonatas, arranged apparently according to key sequence; one side is mainly in C major, the other in the sharper keys G and D. Thus the pieces follow on sensibly like the movements of a symphony. At least they would if Mozart had thought to give them any contrast of speed; with every movement an allegro, contrast is impossible. Of course it can never have occurred to him that anyone would want to hear these little pieces, each written for a different occasion, performed all in a string. I do not see much advantage in disturbing the chronological order. It so happens that the present arrangement results in all the best movements being on one side (the C major sequence) and all the rather dull ones on the other. It does not seem that the choice has been dictated by merit. K.69 and K.274 are not interesting, whereas K.244 is delightful and K.278 (which has trumpets and drums) is almost the best of the lot; it is extraordinary that these two should have been omitted.

All this is perhaps of no more than academic interest, for I do not find the playing and recording outstanding. There is far too much resonance for comfort, as indeed there is on the Vox disc, while some of the performances under Paumgartner are plodding to a degree. All his tempi are slower than those of his rivals, and though occasionally his leisurely versions sound authentic and delightful, there is too often a lack of vitality that results in dullness. K.224 almost comes off at a funereal tempo, or rather it would if the playing were not so out of tune. The two most mature of the sonatas are the most successful, and the organist, denied all chance of shining elsewhere, takes what opportunities there are in K.336. Unlike the Vox disc, this one includes the two recently discovered sonatas, K.241 and 263; both are well worth hearing. But I think I would sooner have the Vox on account of the livelier playing. Also it offers four more sonatas for your money. And if by any chance money is no object, the two Parlophone discs will give you the entire set in equally lively performances not spoilt by excessive resonance.

R.F.

INSTRUMENTAL

BACH. Sonata No. 4 in D minor—Chaconne only (arr. Busoni).
HINDEMITH. Sonata No. 3.
SCHUBERT. Impromptu in A flat major, Op. 90, No. 4. Shura Cherkassky (piano). H.M.V. ALP1574 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

The Hindemith piano sonatas of 1936 have seemed attractive to only a few pianists; Cherkassky earns our gratitude for putting the third of them on disc, for the first time in this country. Yet the majority verdict is one which might command a good deal of sympathy among listeners. The hard style of Hindemith's music in theory should be well suited by the mechanical tone of the piano, but in practice comes terrifyingly near to sounding dull in such monochrome. This Third Sonata has, however, its moments of poetry and grandeur along with its more athletic ones, and some of them do come off very well.

The Bach has its athletic moments too, for Busoni's transcription stretches a pianist nearly as far as the original does a violinist. But the listener, on the other hand, has an easier time of it; for whereas Bach's own writing for unaccompanied violin was necessarily an outline, hinting at the complete state of the music rather than actually sounding it, Busoni's is complete in itself. Bach's implied harmony is made explicit.

This gives the pianist a good deal to contend with, and Cherkassky contends successfully, though not without an occasional waywardness that may be thought to impede momentarily the flow of the massive music. Curiously, this particular pianistic quality seems rather lacking in the Schubert, itself, one would have thought, wayward music above almost every other quality; yet Cherkassky here seems to me to be prosaic.

The Hindemith is undoubtedly the success of the disc, played entirely convincingly, and with a sensitive regard for the more poetical moments of the music. Throughout Cherkassky is well recorded, though a trace of clang, difficult to eradicate, does slightly mar the piano tone. M.M.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Sonatas. No. 1 in F minor, Op. 2, No. 1: No. 7 in D major, Op. 10, No. 3. **Solomon** (piano). H.M.V. ALP1573 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Sonata No. 1:
Backhaus (5/54) LXT2902
Gulda (10/54) LXT2958
Kempff (9/57) DGM18105
Gieseking (11/57) 33CX1488

Sonata No. 7:
Backhaus (10/54) LXT2809
Fischer (11/57) ALP1271
Gieseking (2/58) 33CX1498

These are both fine, scrupulously judged performances. Every detail has been well considered. The first movement of the First Sonata is taken at a whirling *allegro*, much faster than Kempff's. Solomon repeats not only the exposition, but both parts of the movement, which is not indicated on either of my two editions of this sonata. The reprise, each time, of the main theme is beautifully realised. His supple unwinding of the Trio melody is most attractive. The Minuet is sturdily played, though not without sudden Beethovenish touches of impatience. But though this is all admirable, it lacks the element of fancy. The result is prose—perfectly phrased prose—rather than poetry. It is a model performance; but less illuminating than either Gieseking's or Kempff's more faulty but more impetuous interpretations.

This is the third version of the D major Sonata to emerge from Hayes in fairly quick succession. Solomon's control of a slow tempo stands him in good stead in the great slow movement, *largo e mesto*; but, for all its concentration, his reading sounds plain beside Edwin Fischer's supremely eloquent one. His Minuet and Trio do not have the spring and unhurried bounciness of Fischer's, nor his Finale the sparkle and darting fancy. Gieseking, as R.F. pointed out, disappoints us in the *largo*, though his first movement is the best of all. The new H.M.V. is well recorded, perhaps not so well as the Kempff and Gieseking of Op. 2, No. 1, or the Gieseking and Fischer of Op. 10, No. 3. A certain amount of surface noise disturbs both slow movements. A.P.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Sonatas. No. 9 in E major, Op. 14, No. 1. No. 10 in G major, Op. 14, No. 2. No. 13 in E flat major, Op. 27, No. 1. No. 14 in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2, " Moonlight ". **Walter Gieseking** (piano). Columbia 33CX1519 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

My heart sinks a little when I embark on a new performance of the *Moonlight*, reach the sixth bar, and the entry of the melody, and then find that the pianist " holds back ", for expressive purposes, the first beat of the seventh bar, the third G sharp. It means that the triplets have not been conceived as a sustained flow, that again and again, every few bars, there is going to be a little interruption, as if of a broken cog on a wheel. This first movement, it seems to me, calls for the long melody to be " placed " and poised over a seemingly even and seamless flow of triplets (the way that Kempff, among many others, does it); but Gieseking favours the " interrupted "

effect in this new reading of his. It is a "daylit" rather than a "moonlit" interpretation, limpid, with beautiful piano tone. The Scherzo is delicate, too dainty for my taste, missing the robust touch implied in the trio. The finale, however, offers the most free and spontaneously alive piece of playing on the record.

The performances of the two Opus 14 Sonatas will attract those who think that Beethoven is generally played too richly, too romantically, and want to hear it sound not thoughtful, not eloquent, precise, clear, and a little thin, with as little pedal as possible, and a good deal of half-staccato. In other words I cannot recommend these performances very warmly, for all the delicate and poetic touches which never fail to inform Gieseking's playing. The first two movements of the G major Sonata are surely taken at a needlessly slow *allegro* and *allegretto*; the second subject, handled thus, becomes a prim sequence rather than a shaped phrase. The storm which blows up on the last page of the finale is excitingly managed, but elsewhere there is finickiness. Gieseking shows a strange readiness to adopt *non-legato* in passages, especially those in consecutive sixths or octaves, which are plainly marked to be *legato*. The Scherzo of the E flat Sonata, *allegro molto e vivace*, is taken quite extraordinarily slowly; the Adagio is beautifully rendered.

Columbia have given us exceptionally good measure in point of playing-time, and have done so without in any way compromising the quality of sound, which is first-rate throughout. A.P.

BEETHOVEN. Piano Sonatas. No. 21 in C major, Op. 53, "Waldstein"; No. 28 in A major, Op. 101. **Claudio Arrau** (piano). Columbia 33CX1513 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

Sonata No. 21:

Backhaus	(6/51) LXT2532
Gieseking	(10/53) 33CX1055
Matthews	(5/54) 33SX1021
Frugoni	(5/55) PL8650
Solomon	(4/56) ALP1160
Kraus	(11/56) DTL93108
Malinin	(11/56) 33CX1343
Horowitz	(6/57) RB16010

Sonata No. 28:

Backhaus	(9/52) LXT2715
Solomon	(11/55) ALP1272
Kempff	(4/57) DGM18145

A record so fine as this makes one impatient with the acceptable, the respectable, the enjoyable but not supremely distinguished versions of Beethoven piano sonatas which appear month by month to clog the catalogues. A reviewer must appraise them, pronounce them worthy, find any special points of interest in the interpretation, and secretly wonder whether yet another *Waldstein*, or *Pathétique*, or *Moonlight*, or Opus 111 was really necessary. Then there turns up something like this disc—Arrau's first LP of Beethoven sonatas—and before the needle has played through five grooves his interest is quickened. For this is surely Beethoven playing as fine as any that has been put on record since Schnabel's.

What are its characteristics, why is it so different? It is hard to put it into words, but I would suggest that the interpretation displays at every turn the qualities of mind which are most characteristically "Beethovenish". Arrau commands an impeccable, immaculate technique, but nothing that he does is "merely" pianistic. Compare the first movement of the A major with Kempff's (admirable) account. Both players are thoughtful, poetic, both have evidently pondered the significance of Beethoven's direction, "somewhat lively, and with the most inward feeling". But in Kempff there is a kind of surface charm, an impression of stroking the sound out of the keys for its own sake, whereas Arrau (who makes no less beautiful sounds) seems to touch directly on Beethoven's creative nerve. It is superlatively strong playing, strong in conception and strong in execution—which does not mean that the mysterious, searching Adagio of the *Waldstein* or the Adagio of Opus 101, "filled with yearning", are in any way lacking in tenderness—but it is the tenderness of strength, not weakness.

Arrau recreates the *Waldstein* on the most magnificent scale, calling into play an almost orchestral range of tone. For the listener it is an imaginative adventure—as it must have been for the performer; we relive the sonata, bar by bar, section by section, movement by movement. It is all alive, intense. A wonderfully sure left hand mutters ominously in semiquavers, the melody struggles upward to be free: it is thrillingly dramatic, but played without hysteria. So too in Opus 101. I have never heard the March (incisive, with clipped dotted notes) sound so stirring, or the fugato of the finale so amazing and expressive. There are all sorts of specific points that could be noted: the beautifully managed pedalling of the *Waldstein* finale, for example; or the fact that the *glissando* passage is not played *glissando*, but as a cascade of articulate octaves; or occasional freedom of tempo within an unfaltering pulse; or all the different kinds of trill which Arrau has at his command; but there is no incentive to go poking into details when the whole is so fine. Pianists vary from occasion to occasion—on record as in recital; here Arrau has been captured at the peak of his form. The recording, if one notices it, is excellent. A.P.

DEBUSSY. Pour le piano. Images, Set 1, No. 1: Reflets dans l'eau. **Estampes, No. 2:** Soirée dans Grenade. **L'isle joyeuse.**
RAVEL. Sonatina. Valses nobles et sentimentales. Friedrich Gulda (piano). Decca LXT5415 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

This is excellently enjoyable, and to avoid monotony, I have not got out the Gieseking sets, and so can, for once, avoid the regular comparison with the pianist who has "cornered" the Debussy, and very nearly cornered the Ravel, market (very nearly, because some say they prefer Casadesus in Ravel). Gulda's *Sonatina* is a beautifully elegant performance, very clear, very neat, but also most poetic and imaginative. The *Valses Nobles and Sentimentales* are phrased with an ebullience and played with a glitter that are captivating. Similar adjectives can be applied to the Debussy side; I particularly enjoyed Gulda's serious, moving treatment of the Sarabande in *Pour le Piano*; and there is plenty of atmosphere in the *Soirée* and *Isle Joyeuse* (a new version, I fancy, not a transfer of the 78). The recording is excellent. A most recommendable Debussy/Ravel piano coupling for the small collection or for the person who does not want to run to the complete sets. A.P.

CHOPIN. Scherzo in B flat minor, Op. 31. Nocturne in B major, Op. 9, No. 3. Nocturne in F major, Op. 15, No. 1. Nocturne in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 1. Nocturne in E flat major, Op. 9, No. 2. Barcarolle, Op. 60. Scherzo in C sharp minor, Op. 39. Vladimir Horowitz (piano). R.C.A. RB16064 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

The record is called "Horowitz Plays Chopin", which he does with his accustomed brilliance, fancy, and pianistic genius. Though we may deplore some of the things he does with the phrasing, there is no need to resist the spell of the playing, which is poetic as well as virtuosic, and filled with the most exquisite and exciting effects. The recording is crystal-clear, with that slightly brittle quality hardening in *forte* that R.C.A. seems to favour. A poor sleeve-note has been taken over direct from America, with spellings like "program", "theater", unchanged. A.P.

HANDEL. Entrée; Menuet; Gavotte; Air lentement; Concerto (Allegro).
PURCELL. Voluntary in G major; Voluntary in C major; Verse in F major. Edited by McLean. Recorded at All Saints Church, Rotherham. **Thurston Dart** (organ). H.M.V. 7EP7051 (7 in., 12s. 10½d.).

Mr. Dart seems to have an extraordinary knack for discovering fine organs. The two he plays here are both the work of famous makers—the Rotherham one contains much of Snetzler's original pipework of 1777, and that at St. John's, Wolverhampton, is almost entirely by Renatus (René) Harris, the great competitor of Father Smith. This latter instrument, in fact, sounds to have been very little altered since it was built in 1683, and I can credit the high claim made by the sleeve-note that "it is one of the largest and most beautiful of seventeenth-century English organs still remaining". Certainly the Handel pieces sound absolutely ravishing, and I very much hope that we shall be given a chance of hearing Mr. Dart play some of the organ concertos on it. I am less enthusiastic about the Purcell side of the disc, because it sounds to me as though the alterations to the Rotherham organ included raising of the wind-pressure: at any rate the tone-quality is coarse and muffled by comparison with the Wolverhampton one. Nevertheless this disc is a gem that anyone interested in old organs should make a point of hearing. J.N.

LISZT. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6 in D flat, G.244. Valse Impromptu in A flat, G.213. Consolations, G.172: No. 2 in E ; No. 3 in D flat. **Rigoletto Concert Paraphrase, G.434. La Campanella, G.140. Hungarian Rhapsody No. 15,** "Rakoczy March". **Tamàs Vàsàry** (piano). D.G.G. DGM19105 (12 in., 41s. 9d.).

When almost every pianist new to the gramophone lists makes his appearance in a blaze of publicity, often with rhapsodic claims on his behalf and testimonials from the great (poor thing, how else is he to claim attention in a world knee-deep in pianists ?) it comes as a heart-warming and exciting surprise to find a newcomer, unheralded by any fanfares, who is obviously in the top flight. Such a one is Tamàs Vàsàry, who was not even a name to me when I put this disc on the turntable. After listening enraptured to his *Rigoletto-Paraphrase*, I called some friends in and started the record again: they were equally thrilled by the feathery lightness of his runs, the easy effortlessness of his bravura, the sensitivity of his phrasing and tonal shadings, the logical fantasy of his rubato, and the sheer poetry he finds in what is too often treated as mere piano wizardry. If ever a player could recapture Liszt's own magic, this is he: without question this is the most *beautiful* Liszt playing I have ever heard, quite eclipsing all other contenders. (The recording quality, which is first-class, also contributes to the effect.) And who is this paragon ? Apparently a 24-year-old Hungarian who started as a child prodigy (he won the first prize of the Liszt Society at the age of 14), became a protégé of Kodály, has played in Eastern Europe, Germany, Belgium and Brazil, and now teaches at the Academy in Budapest. What range of style he commands in the rest of the repertoire I have no idea ; but if it can approach his Liszt interpretations, Vàsàry will be counted among the really great players of our time. L.S.

SCHUBERT. Impromptus. No. 3 in G flat major: No. 4 in A flat major. **Adrian Aeschbacher** (piano). D.G.G. EPL30243 (7 in., 16s. 8½d.).

Aeschbacher takes the G flat impromptu almost as fast as Schnabel used to play it, and this gives it a restless effect which I do not think the composer can have intended. Played much slower, this piece makes one think of Liszt's *Liebestraume*, and it is, I suppose, arguable that it is this coincidence that has led to the more usual dreamy interpretation. Whether this is so or not, I must confess I prefer it dreamy. In the A flat impromptu Aeschbacher only occasionally falls short of his own very high standards of clean articulation. In the middle section he comes down good and loud on a wrong note ; but he has the feel of this music in his fingers, and plays the pianissimo triplet passage most beautifully. It is a pleasure to hear this attractive piece played lyrically, without any straining after exhibitionism. The piano quality is realistic. R.F.

Tamàs Vàsàry

VIGNETTES. Polonaise in D major, Op. 4 (Wieniawski). **Asturiana: Jota** (Falla). **Berceuse** (Ravel). **Romanza Andaluza** (Sarasate). **Träumerei** (Schumann). **Air** (Bach). **Perpetuum mobile** (Novácek). **Melodie** (Tchaikovsky). **The Maid with the flaxen hair** (Debussy). **Scherzo - Tarentelle** (Wieniawski). **Nathan Milstein** (violin), **Leon Pommers** (piano). Capitol P8396 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

I am not too confident that I can recognise a vignette when I hear one. The category seems to include old-time arrangements like Bach's *Air on the G string*, interesting novelties such as Ravel's *Berceuse* on the name Gabriel Fauré which is new to the L.P. catalogue, with some fireworks that Wieniawski originally intended should have orchestral accompaniment at the beginning and end. The Tchaikovsky *Mélodie* is not, as you might expect, an arrangement of the *Andante cantabile*, but one of the three little pieces Tchaikovsky actually wrote for violin and piano (Op. 42), and Milstein might consider one day recording the whole set.

It would be pointless to say too much of the musical content of a record such as this, because it will be bought for the fiddle playing rather than the music. At his best Milstein is superb ; for instance in the Wieniawski pieces, *Träumerei*, and the delightful Sarasate dance. He does not seem to feel the Ravel, which he plays much too fast, or the slow bits in the well-known Falla *Jota*, and he is given such a "virtuoso" balance that he sounds quite loud even when he is probably playing softly. He seems right on top of the listener ; one can hear him breathing, and when, as at the end of the Ravel the piano has the tune, the intended effect is not realised. For some reason the balance seems much better in the rather attractive Novácek *Perpetuum mobile*, which is magically played. R.F.

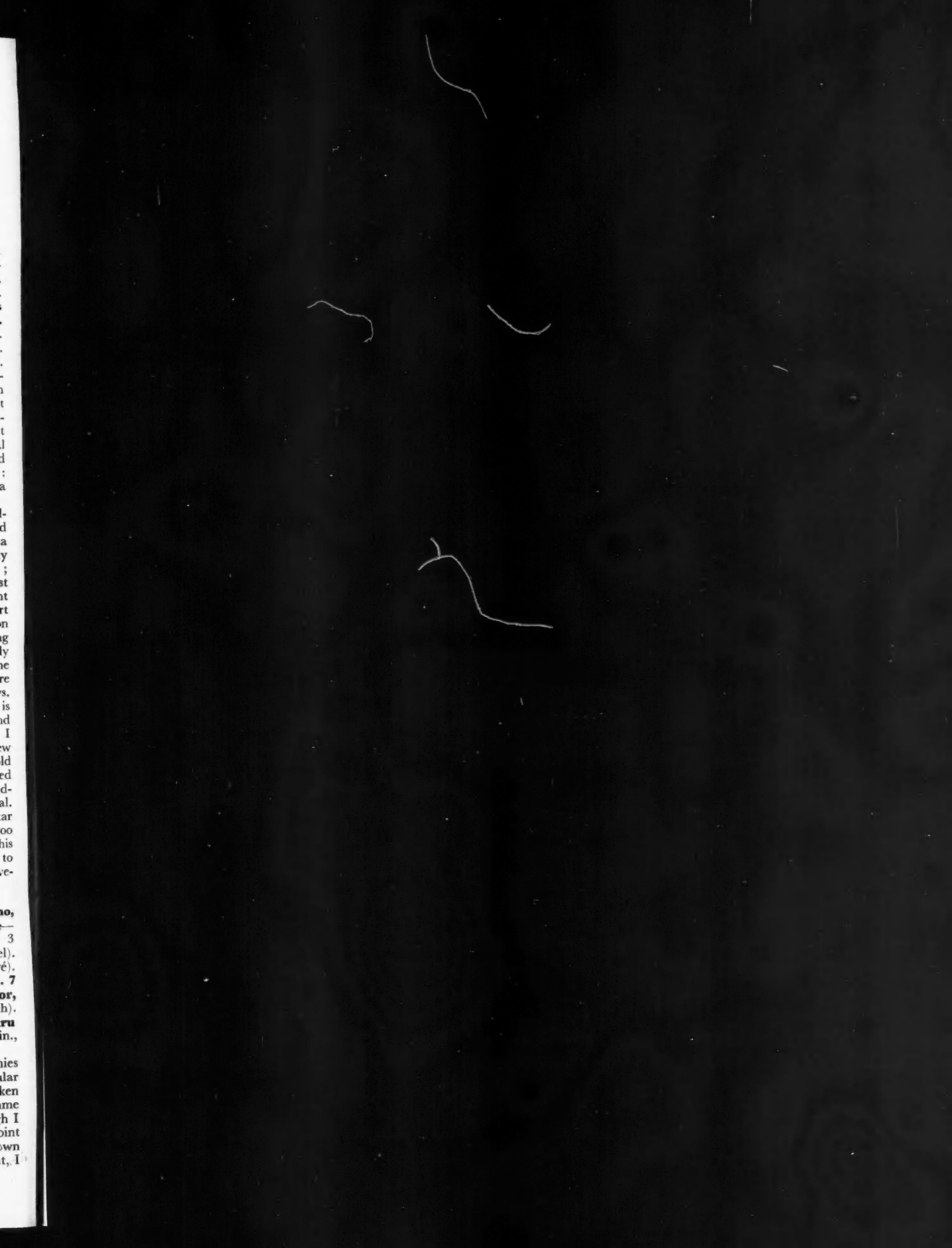
SEE PAGE 532 FOR AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT REGARDING BINDING.

LAURINDO ALMEIDA. Tarantella: La Guarda Cuydadosa (Castelnuovo-Tedesco). **Miniature Suite** (Duarte). **Sonatina for guitar** (Albert Harris). **Sonata for guitar** (Turina). **En los Trigales** (Rodrigo). **Preludes Nos. 2, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 12** (Ponce). **Laurindo Almeida** (guitar). Capitol P8392 (12 in., 41s. 8½d.).

This has at least one substantial advantage over every other guitar record of which I know: it does not consist entirely of short pieces. At last we are offered some contrast in stature, from the three-movement sonata by Turina—the most substantial solo guitar work we have yet been allowed to hear—to the Preludes by Ponce: minute-long miniatures which make a most agreeable sound.

In between come two pieces by Castelnuovo-Tedesco—a vivacious *Tarantella* and a faintly military *Guarda Cuydadosa* ; a slightly mock old-fashioned but distinctly pleasant Miniature Suite by Duarte ; *En los Trigales* by Rodrigo, at a guess a most rewarding piece from the player's point of view ; and the Sonatina by Albert Harris. This starts spikily but soon becomes human, the strain perhaps proving too much for the composer as it undoubtedly would have done for the listener ; but he ends by giving us nearly as much pleasure as he used to in the old Monseigneur days.

This most enterprising programme is played superlatively by Almeida, and recorded superlatively by Capitol. I would like to think that it opens up a new era in guitar records, one in which our old friend the "movement from" is promoted from his hitherto permanent place of stand-by to where he belongs—the exceptional. Short pieces, of course, do suit the guitar very well indeed. But you can have too many of them at a stretch, and until this happy record appeared you have had to do so, relentlessly, on the guitar's twelve-inch LP's. M.M.

MINDRU KATZ. Suite for piano, Op. 10 (Enesco). **Laideronette—Impératrice des Pagodes,** No. 3 from Suite "Ma mère l'Oye" (Ravel). **Nocturne No. 6, Op. 63** (Fauré). **Prelude in C major, Op. 12, No. 7** (Prokofiev). **Prelude in E minor, Op. 34, No. 14** (Shostakovitch). **Toccata** (Khachaturian). **Mindru Katz** (piano). Pye CCL30111 (12 in., 39s. 11½d.).

For years the gramophone companies have been flinging pot-pourris of popular classics at an avid public, but it has taken Pye to think up a real Third Programme rag-bag. I thoroughly enjoyed it, though I really do not see any sort of a selling point about the record. The pianist is as unknown in this country as the music. You might, I